

A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND ART

Horizon

EDITED BY CYRIL CONNOLLY

SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT IN THE COMING DECADES BY L. L. WHYTE

THE UNCHARTED BY LUDOVIC KENNEDY

NOVELIST-PHILOSOPHERS: XIII—CERVANTES BY GERALD BRENAN

THE PSYCHOLOGY OF ART BY ANDRÉ MALRAUX

WHERE SHALL JOHN GO? XVI—INDIA BY CHARLES HARVEY

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W. H. AUDEN

IN PRAISE OF LIMESTONE

If it form the one landscape that we the inconstant ones
Are consistently homesick for, this is chiefly
Because it dissolves in water. Mark these rounded slopes
With their surface fragrance of thyme and beneath
A secret system of caves and conduits; hear these springs
That spurt out everywhere with a chuckle
Each filling a private pool for its fish and carving
Its own little ravine whose cliffs entertain
The fern and the butterfly; examine this region
Of short distances and definite places:
What could be more like Mother or a fitter background
For her son, for the nude young male who lounges
Against a rock displaying his dildo, never doubting
That for all his faults he is loved, whose works are but
Extensions of his power to charm? From weathered outcrop
To hill-top temple, from appearing waters to
Conspicuous fountains, from a wild to a formal vineyard,
Are ingenious but short steps that a child's wish
To receive more attention than his brothers, whether
By pleasing or teasing, can easily take.

Watch, then, the band of rivals as they climb up and down
Their steep stone gennels in twos and threes, sometimes
Arm in arm, but never, thank God, in step, or engaged
On the shady side of a square at midday in
Volatile discourse, knowing each other too well to think
There are any important secrets, unable
To conceive a god whose temper-tantrums are moral
And not to be pacified by a clever line
Or a good lay: for, accustomed to a stone that responds,
They have never had to veil their faces in awe

Of a crater whose blazing fury could not be fixed;

Adjusted to the local needs of valleys

Where everything can be touched or reached by walking,

Their eyes have never looked into infinite space

Through the lattice-work of a nomad's comb; born lucky,

Their legs have never encountered the fungi

And insects of the jungle, the monstrous forms and lives

With which we have nothing, we like to hope, in common.

So, when one of them goes to the bad, the way his mind
works

Remains comprehensible: to become a pimp

Or deal in fake jewelry or ruin a fine tenor voice

For effects that bring down the house could happen to all

But the best and the worst of us . . .

That is why, I suppose,

The best and worst never stayed here long but sought

Immoderate soils where the beauty was not so external,

The light less public and the meaning of life

Something more than a mad camp. 'Come!', cried the granite
wastes,

'How evasive is your humour, how accidental

Your kindest kiss, how permanent is death.' (Saints-to-be

Slipped away sighing.) 'Come!', purred the clays and gravels,

'On our plains there is room for armies to drill; rivers

Wait to be tamed and slaves to construct you a tomb

In the grand manner: soft as the earth is mankind and both

Need to be altered.' (Intendant Caesars rose and

Left, slamming the door.) But the really reckless were fetched

By an older colder voice, the oceanic whisper:

'I am the solitude that asks and promises nothing;

That is how I shall set you free. There is no love;

There are only the various envies, all of them sad.'

They were right, my dear, all those voices were right

And still are; this land is not the sweet home that it looks

Nor its peace the historical calm of a site

Where something was settled once and for all. A backward
And dilapidated province, connected
To the big busy world by a tunnel, with a certain
Seedy appeal, is that all it is now? Not quite.
It has a worldly duty which in spite of itself
It does not neglect, but calls into question
All the Great Powers assume; it disturbs our rights. The poet,
Admired for his earnest habit of calling
The sun the sun, his mind Puzzle, is made uneasy
By these solid statues which so obviously doubt
His antimythological myth; and these gamins,
Pursuing the scientist down the tiled colonnade
With such lively offers, rebuke his concern for Nature's
Remotest aspects: I, too, am reproached, for what
And how much you know. Not to lose time, not to get caught,
Not to be left behind, not, please!, to resemble
The beasts who repeat themselves, or a thing like water
Or stone whose conduct can be predicted, these
Are our Common Prayer, whose greatest comfort is music
Which can be made anywhere, is invisible,
And does not smell. In so far as we have to look forward
To death as a fact, no doubt we are right; but if
Sins can be forgiven, if bodies rise from the dead,
These modifications of matter into
Innocent athletes and gesticulating fountains,
Made solely for pleasure, make a further point:
The blessed will not care what angle they are regarded from,
Having nothing to hide. Dear, I know nothing of
Either, but when I try to imagine a faultless love
Or the life to come, what I hear is the murmur
Of underground streams, what I see is a limestone landscape.

J. LAUGHLIN

WHEN DOES THE PLAY BEGIN?

(A POLITICAL POEM)

MOTHER when does the
show begin when does

something happen hush
dear be quiet in just a

minute now but you
said that a long time

ago I want the curtain
to go up hush dear be

quiet it's never good
manners to talk when

the music is playing
but mother I'm tired

of the music and they
keep playing the same

piece hush darling in
just a minute now here

eat a piece of candy
no I don't want any

more candy mother I
want them to begin the

play I want to see the
lights go on and have

the people walk around
and talk & laugh & sing!

L. L. WHYTE

SCIENTIFIC THOUGHT IN THE COMING DECADES

WHAT are likely to be the main developments in scientific thought during the second half of this century, and how will they influence social trends?

There is no doubt of the importance of this question in making any estimate of the social outlook for the coming period. During the last hundred years exact science, based ultimately on Newtonian principles, has been the greatest single influence affecting the development of society, and this influence has been exerted not only directly through its technological applications, but also indirectly through its effect on thought in general. The influence of science on general methods of thought, for example on ethical, social and political conceptions, is subtler and more elusive than the effect of technology on industry and warfare. Yet in certain periods the impact of new scientific ideas and principles may be as important as that of new inventions, and in this survey it will be assumed that this will be true in the coming decades. The argument will suggest that the practical discovery of the atomic bomb will be followed by theoretical discoveries of equal social importance.

At first sight it may be considered fantastic to attempt to anticipate the future of scientific thought. It is often considered that prophecy of such a kind cannot constitute anything more than an arbitrary personal guess, so weighted with the probability of error as to be of no practical value. Yet this need not always be so. The history of science shows that the general character of new theoretical developments has often been anticipated years or even decades before they received their definitive expression or their decisive experimental confirmation. This was true in respect of both Newton's formulation of the law of gravity and Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection. And it is not surprising. It is often much easier to sense what is in the air than to achieve its precise constructive formulation, and the more important the issue the more likely it is to be the case. Thus we

find that there were periods when the scientific world seems, at least in retrospect, to have been waiting for a definite step which many knew to be necessary but none could yet achieve. At such times it often happens that speculative philosophers, mathematicians, and others are occupied in preparing the ideas which will subsequently be applied by the scientist.

The outline of the future of scientific thought which is put forward here is based on the view that we are now in one of these anticipatory periods. A study of scientific thought, particularly in physics and biology, during the first half of this century reveals certain latent trends which are not yet fully explicit, but may mature in the new theories of the coming period.

So much in provisional explanation of this speculative attempt; its final justification will be given or withheld by the actual course of events. But it must be made clear that two further assumptions underlie these predictions: (1) that the continuity and vigour of science is not prejudiced by economic decline, State influence, or by war—on this I express no view; and (2) that the scientific search for a more complete understanding expressible in progressively more comprehensive theories will continue to be as strikingly justified in the future as it has been in the past—an assumption I believe will prove correct.

It is not possible to set out the evidence here, but there are many signs that the coming period may see the establishment of a *single unified science* covering the inorganic and organic realms and also providing the valid scientific approach to the subject matter of psychology, and possibly also of sociology. The inter-relationships of the different branches of science are already recognized to be of great importance, but are not yet fully understood. In the anticipated unified science the complexity and departmentalism of the different methods of the special sciences might be overcome in a simple and comprehensive synthesis. There is probably no reason why this unified theory should not be as clear and objectively reliable in relation to its wide subject matter, as the classical theories of mathematical physics are in relation to their limited fields. Thus all systematic and objectively confirmed knowledge would be brought within a single and relatively simple order, the apparent complexity of phenomena being recognized as at least partly due to the use of inappropriate methods.

A unified science of this kind must rest on a few fundamental concepts expressed in *universal principles* applicable to all kinds of systems, whether inorganic or organic, material or mental, etc. It is probable that these principles will express a *new conception of natural process as possessing a formative or developmental character*. The conservation principles used by exact science hitherto (for example, the conservation of atoms, matter, energy, momentum, etc.) are proving too limited in scope to account for processes which possess an inherent progressive or one-way tendency (such as the evening out of temperature differences, biological multiplication, growth, differentiation, etc.). It is therefore probable that a unified science must be based on a concept of a formative process, the conservation principles of classical physics applying to those aspects of process where the formative or one-way property is negligible. This means that the new unified science will reveal *the precise scope and limitations of physical measurements*. Quantity would be seen to represent one aspect only of the order of nature, and relations of succession, for example the fact that growth is seldom if ever reversed, recognized as another important aspect of phenomena.

Such a science would throw new light on the relations of wholes to parts, that is of complex systems to their components, so that the behaviour of parts would be understood not only when isolated, but also as components of larger systems. It would then be evident that *the process of the whole often overrides the tendencies of the parts*, so that in many situations the larger system must be considered before predictions can be made about the parts.

But in addition to these general features, the establishment of a simple unified science implies a dramatic situation in relation to the fundamentals of atomic physics. It means that physical research must seem, at least provisionally, to have reached *a limit to the fine structure of matter*, so that neither experiment nor theory will suggest the need for further minute structure within, say, the hydrogen nucleus. Physical theory will have achieved a satisfactory description of all known facts about nuclei, atoms, etc., so that fundamental physics will, at least for the time being, become a *closed subject* offering no fields for further research. The indeterminacy principle, discovered in 1925, has already indicated that there are limits to the possible accuracy of space-time measurement; this may mean that the method of physical analysis,

that is, the division of complex systems into smaller and simpler parts, may have been exhausted. Physics may have touched bottom; research into smaller and smaller regions of space may have come to an end.

In a restricted (and perhaps temporary) sense, physics would have attained absolute knowledge of its fundamentals, and this knowledge would be expressed in a perfected theory. *A wave of theoretical clarification*, based on the universal principles confirmed in physics, would thus pass from fundamental physics through molecular physics to biology, and on towards the mental and social sciences. The unified science would be closed and perfected at one end, and be steadily extended in clarity and scope towards *the science of man*.

This new science of man would imply the coalescence of physiology and psychology in a concept of the human individual overcoming the body-mind dualism.

But this in turn suggests that the new conception of process must be neutral as between matter and mind; it will not suggest that phenomena are either material or mental, but will provide a more general and comprehensive method which can reduce in special cases to the 'purely physical', and in other cases to the 'purely mental' aspects of process. Indeed, the principles of the unified science must stand impartially behind physics, biology and psychology, and show where contemporary physical conceptions are applicable, where biological concepts are valid, and where psychological concepts are necessary. The unified science will not explain biology in terms of physics, or vice versa, but reinterpret the concepts of the sciences of matter, life, and mind in terms of comprehensive principles of which all other principles are special cases. A true scientific synthesis must do no less than this.

So powerful an intellectual instrument will give an unprecedented stimulus to the development of a valid science of man providing a balanced conception of the human person and of society in process of development, and including a recognition of all the requirements of a full human life at different stages of social development. Such a science of man will inevitably in some degree modify man's conception of himself and therefore also his ethical attitudes. A science of man is of necessity more than a science in the classical sense, for it must state the optimal

conditions for individual and social development. The new unified science will therefore itself represent more than science, and might be called a meta-science, or even a metaphysics.

It is hardly possible to exaggerate the influence which the new science would have on thought in all fields, if these speculations were to prove correct. The basic principles of the science would express a universal method of thought, or way of thinking about all natural processes which leads to correct results when properly applied. The proved validity of the method in physics and biology would bring it unique prestige and lead to its immediate application in all realms of thought. Indeed it must be expected that it will affect the entire tradition of thought in all countries where science is honoured. No barrier would for long resist the spread of its influence. No ideology, whether secular or religious, would be capable of surviving into the twenty-first century which could not display its conformity to the basic principles of the new science. On the view presented here, the unified science would ultimately constitute the only universal authority. Beside this new social power, the influence of the world religions and of orthodox marxism would decline, because they are not unassailably rooted in objective universal truth.

The new scientific orthodoxy will not, however, be arbitrary, tyrannical, or static. On account of its objective truth it would be widely acceptable and therefore represent the first power fitted to serve as the instrument of a universal human society in process of development. In recent years an unbalanced and over-technological science has intensified certain harsh, anti-humane, and degrading tendencies in the technical-collectivist society which is developing in many countries. In the long run, only a balanced and therefore humane science can check this tendency and sustain the elasticity and variety which are indispensable to the continued health of any human community.

But we have still to consider the nature of the influence of the new science on thought in general. What will be the main principles of the new method of thought which will enjoy such unique prestige?

First, and most important of all, it is clear that the discovery of universally valid principles will encourage universality in all realms. The new outlook will thus tend to bring together cultures based on contrasted traditions and principles, and so to further

the development of a universal society. The unified science will initiate an epoch of universality.

Moreover, the science will teach that the actual phenomenon is always a process of change; that all attempts to resist or neglect change are ultimately abortive; that all process is of one character, apparent dualism being of limited validity; that the whole in general overrides the parts, and the whole must often be considered before the part; that the role of quantitative factors in determining process is restricted and not always decisive; that process is in general formative and developmental. It will be seen that these principles, though scientific in form, have immediate ethical and social implications when applied to human affairs. Moreover, their influence will in general be towards repairing some of the defects of recent thought. This is not the result of wishful thinking in drawing up this estimate of the future of science. It is inevitable that if man understands nature and himself sufficiently he will find himself knowing how he must think and act if he is to fulfil the potentialities of his own nature. Universal principles alone can guide the thought and action of the individual, just as they alone can promote the development of a universal society.

The principles just outlined are similar to those of dialectical materialism, and like the latter they hold the germ of a world outlook which might contribute to the establishment of a world society. There is little doubt that an event as dramatic and pregnant as the establishment of a unified science might serve mankind well in the coming period. For the sake of that possibility, many lovers of fundamental research may be prepared to accept the loss implied in the attainment of absolute knowledge in certain fields. Certainly from one point of view the perpetual search for knowledge is more inspiring than the prospect of the attainment of final knowledge. The intellect is deadened where there is no more to learn. But the pure search for knowledge is already prejudiced by the urgent demands of the social situation, and the human need for a universal truth which can overcome dualisms and conflicts now overrides all other considerations. In any case, if observation and experiment unquestionably confirm the principles of a unified science, then scientists will have no choice but to accept the situation, even if research in certain fields is thereby brought to an end.

The growth of exact science from 1600 onwards led to a period marked by the hope that scientific research would result in the emancipation of the race, at least from its material needs. This hope marked much of European thought during the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As it proved, science has achieved the possibility of that emancipation from want, but this possibility has not been realized, because the science of the time was unbalanced and undermined religious and traditional attitudes without replacing them by any new conviction of adequate power. Throughout the nineteenth century, many thinkers had given warnings that a mechanical quantitative science, blind to its social consequences, would endanger civilization. Their voices were heard but their message was neglected, until the bitter experiences of the last thirty years made a platitude of their prophecy. One result today is that in the scientific world there now prevails an unhappy sense of disillusionment regarding the ultimate value of fundamental research. Indeed, the assurances that atomic energy will prove of value to industry are too apologetic to issue from anything but a guilty conscience. The tragedy of science today is symbolized in the fact that it became Einstein's role to persuade Washington to take up the research which led to the atomic bomb.

Terrible as these facts are for those who value the enquiring intellect, there is an answer and a way out. On the interpretation presented in this article the contemporary reaction from fundamental experimental research is from one point of view appropriate and even necessary. The greater need today is for theoretical research; for the discovery and formulation of powerful unifying principles; for the restoration of order, simplicity, and significance to knowledge. Experiment and theory are both indispensable to science, and the healthy progress of science depends on a continual oscillation of emphasis from one to the other. The balance should not, and indeed cannot, be held steady. The scientist must go out in search of facts, but he must also sometimes pause to arrange them. There can be no question that the more pressing requirement is now for new theoretical methods appropriate to the vast array of established facts. If, as a consequence of greater attention to theoretical inquiry, a unified science is indeed established, the present disillusionment will pass away, and there will be an extraordinary stimulus to the application of the new absolute

knowledge of fundamentals for the benefit of man. Social disillusion with experimental science will be followed by social confidence in the application of the new theoretical principles.

But what is the immediate value of these speculations? For those who recognize at least the possibility of their proving in some degree correct, who consider that they are of sufficient interest to be taken seriously, I suggest that they contain an important practical implication. If the trend of science is in this direction then theoretical and practical endeavours which are in conformity with this trend are more likely to bear fruit than those which are not. It is therefore worth considering whether all thought and action should not as far as possible be brought into relation to the outlook presented here. If the next half-century is in fact to see the advance to a unified science, a great broadening of human thought, involving the overcoming of many prejudices, must be brought about. Those who work in this direction will at least have the inner satisfaction of taking part in a great historical movement; those who dislike and reject the new ideas, and there are sure to be plenty of these, will provide the resistance and struggle without which no new movement can attain maturity. In the scientific world, as in every other, resistance serves to challenge the new to greater efforts of discipline and achievement.

Every great movement is in essence simple, and this is true of the anticipated unified science and of the social epoch which it will mark. It will be a time of universality, of universal principles displaying a common ground beneath the natural diversity of phenomena and of peoples. It will therefore result in the adjustment of exaggerated or inappropriate contrasts, in philosophy as in the standard of living of the peoples. The period will be one, not of infinite and romantic aspirations, but of the practical task of ordering finite patterns in a finite world. Social change will become less violent and arbitrary, and social action conform more closely to general principles. For it is only through the intellectual discovery of universal principles and their application in practice that the new science and the new society can be established. The purpose of this article has been to suggest that this process is already under way.

LUDOVIC KENNEDY

THE UNCHARTED

THE cruiser *Apollo* was beating north-eastwards across the South Atlantic to Bermuda. Her navigating officer, Lieutenant-Commander Kemp, sat in the privacy of his charthouse, pondering on his chances of promotion. His seniority as Lieutenant-Commander was seven and a half years and his last chance of promotion to Commander would come with the publication of the half-yearly lists on 1 July. It was now the beginning of May.

Kemp was regarded by those who knew him as a conscientious officer of high integrity and character; and it was common knowledge in the *Apollo* that ill luck rather than bad management had so far robbed him of his laurels. As captain of a small vessel during the early days of the war, he had ordered the depth charges to be made ready. The order had been misunderstood with the result that an enemy submarine which ought to have been sunk had got clean away. A Court of Inquiry had remarked tartly that Kemp should have satisfied himself that the order had been carried out; and later Their Lordships had expressed Their views in a letter that showed neither charm nor charity. It had been a small blemish on an otherwise chaste record; but not one (as Kemp himself knew) which an officer seeking promotion could afford.

As he lay stretched on the narrow charthouse bunk, tuning his body to the motion of the ship, listening to the waves slapping monotonously against the sides, he let his mind dwell for a moment on the new horizons that the rank of Commander would open to him. The financial aspect was the most appealing. He would be assured of at least another seven years' employment on a higher scale of pay, and (even if he were not promoted to Captain) an increased pension at the end of them. This thought pleased him less for his own sake than for his wife's. He had married Laura, the beautiful daughter of an impecunious Somerset clergyman, ten years previously. She had borne him four sons, Jonathan, Nicholas, Peter and Paul. Peter and Paul were twins and had been mistakes. They were mistakes he could ill afford. It was not easy to support a large family on Lieutenant-Commander's

pay. Neither he nor his wife had any private income and the new naval allowances had been largely offset by the risen cost of living. He thought of his home, the upper floors of a gaunt Victorian villa in the back streets of Southsea. On Commander's pay he might be able to exchange it for a cottage at West Meon or a small house at Havant. There were many small luxuries he might afford on Commander's pay: a full-time Nanny for the boys; a new dress for Laura. If only something would happen between now and 1 July whereby he might prove his mettle to Their Lordships. But what?

His thoughts were interrupted by a knock at the door.

'Navigating officer, sir?'

'Yes.'

'Captain would like to see you, sir. And he says to bring a chart of the area.'

Kemp hoisted himself out of his bunk, selected a chart marked East Coast of South America, and went below.

'You sent for me, sir?'

'Ah, Kemp.'

The captain was at his table and motioned Kemp to a chair beside him with a precise authoritative gesture.

'The Chief has just reported an engine-room defect that will take twenty-four hours to repair. We can do the job ourselves but the ship must be stopped. He'd rather not risk waiting till we get to Bermuda. Nor would I. I've suggested that we run in to some sheltered bay along the coast, adjusting course and speed so as to arrive about noon tomorrow. What do you think about that?'

'Sounds all right, sir.'

'Let's have a look at the chart. Now then, where are we?'

They plunged into a technical discussion concerning knots and distances.

'This looks a good place,' said the captain, stubbing the chart with his forefinger, 'Patagan Bay.'

'Or how about Belos Bay, sir, a bit further to the no'thward?'

'There's not much between them. Yes, Belos if you like. We'll pop in there. You might make the necessary arrangements.'

On his way back to the charthouse, Kemp called up to the bridge, 'I haven't had a decent sight for two days. You might see that I'm called for morning stars.'

★ ★ ★

Three thousand miles away, Laura was saying good-night to Jonathan and Nicholas.

'Mummy, where's Daddy now?' asked Jonathan.

'Oh, a long way away.'

'Are there pirates where Daddy is?'

'I expect so.'

'Miss Pumpton says that parts of the Chinese coast are infested by pirates.'

'Does she?'

'And Perkins, that's a boy in my class, says he's going to be a pirate.'

'I'm going to be a Chinese pirate now,' said Nicholas, gripping his pillow.

'Oh, no, you're not.' She smoothed the pillow and pushed him gently back into bed. Nicholas giggled. 'Now, you're both to go to sleep.' She tucked in the sheets, kissed them and turned off the light. The telephone began ringing.

'How long has Daddy been away, Mummy?'

'A long time, my darling.'

'As long as a year?'

'Almost. Now no more talking.'

'I wish he'd come back.'

She closed the door.

'Hullo?'

'Laura?'

'Hubert! I wasn't expecting you.'

'I think I can get down tonight.'

'Oh, darling, that's wonderful.'

'By the 7.40. How's the rabbit-warren?'

'Stormy and rather piratical. How's Grub Street?'

'Sordid but fairly profitable. They wanted me to go to Saudi-Arabia tomorrow. To cover a war.'

'And you're not going?'

'No, the Arabs or whoever live there have postponed it. I've got the day off so I shall spend it with you instead.'

'That will be nice. I'll go and make up your bed.'

'Will you?'

'Really, Hubert . . .'

★ ★ ★

Dawn came creeping early over the black waters, stamping the waves with streaks of silver, twisting them into huge ingots of molten lead. Boy (2nd Class) Briggs, bridge messenger of the morning watch, did not notice it. This was his first trip at sea and for the last three days he had been continuously and thoroughly sick. He had not thought it possible that anyone could be so sick. He squatted wretchedly in a pool of water at the back of the bridge, his eyes half-closed, his lips opening and shutting in a desperate effort to keep down the rising nausea.

'Messenger!'

The voice of the officer of the watch came to him remotely from out of the pit. He croaked a reply.

'Go down and tell Mr. Kemp we've some beautiful stars for him but if he doesn't come soon they'll fly away.'

Briggs could make no sort of sense of this but he was too exhausted to question it. It seemed to be all a part of the nightmare existence he was experiencing. The only officer he knew was Kent, the doctor, who had given him some large yellow pills in the mistaken belief they would cure his sea-sickness. He presumed the message was for him. He stumbled down the bridge ladder and set off aft.

The doctor was a heavy sleeper. During the war he had become accustomed to being woken at all hours of the night to unravel obscure and often meaningless ciphers. Three years of peacetime service had not dulled him to the appreciation of eight hours' uninterrupted sleep. He was woken by a noise like a steam-hammer and opened his eyes to see the sodden figure of Boy Briggs beating a vigorous tattoo on his washstand.

'Waddyerwant?'

'Got a message.'

'Wassisay?'

'The officer says the stars are beautiful. They'll fly away soon he says.'

The doctor gripped his blankets angrily and turned over.

'Oh sugar off,' he said, 'sugar off for Christ's sake.'

But Boy Briggs, who knew when the contents of his stomach had reached a point of no return, had already sugared. He reached the quarter-deck rails just in time.

When Kemp arrived on the bridge, it was daylight.

'Oh, well,' he said philosophically, 'we'll have to rely on dead reckoning.'

* * *

The ship glided into the narrow channel between the two headlands. The wind had died away and the clouds were separating to reveal patches of blue sky. On the fo'c'sle were the anchor-party. They stood about like so many sheep waiting for a signal, their eyes fastened on the bridge where the captain, shepherd-like, held aloft his absurd little anchor-flag. Kemp, crouched behind the pelorus, was fixing the ship's position by compass bearings. Other officers, attracted to the bridge by the curiosity of a new anchorage, stood quietly at the back of the compass platform and commented on the scenery about them. The coast was rocky and, except for a few bare hillocks near the shore, featureless. There was no sign of human or animal habitation.

'If this is Belos Bay,' said the captain, 'I don't think I like it. Are you ready to anchor, Mr. Kemp?'

But Kemp was not ready. Until a few moments ago he had been feeling hugely pleased with himself. Without the help of sun or stars he had brought the ship across 700 miles of ocean to the threshold of her destination; nor in doing so had he had to deviate one degree from his estimated course. It was a feat of which he was justly proud. Now it seemed he was to be beaten on the post. He had taken as landmarks for his bearings the two headlands on either beam and a small bun-like hill at the head of the bay. Instead of the three bearings neatly intersecting, there had appeared on the chart a 'cocked hat' triangle of alarming proportions. Kemp could not make it out.

'If we don't anchor soon, Mr. Kemp, we'll be on the bloody beach.'

Half-buried beneath the chart canopy, Kemp completed his latest and biggest cocked hat, and said in a voice of quiet desperation, 'Let go, sir'.

'Half-astern together.'

Down went the toy flag, away rattled the anchor. The engines began to take off the way and the ship shuddered with the vibration.

'Stop both.' He turned to Kemp. 'What's the depth of water?'

'Ten fathoms, sir. Sandy bottom.'

'Three shackles out, sir.'

'Bridge,' said a tinny plaintive voice, 'Forebridge.'

It was difficult to tell where the voice was coming from. Several officers bawled 'bridge' down a number of voicepipes. The doctor struck lucky.

'Echo-sounding machine reports eight fathoms of water, sir.'

'What do you make of that, Kemp?'

'I can't understand it, sir. I've been having trouble with the compass bearings, too.'

'Well, you might look into it and let me know.'

'Five shackles out on the starboard anchor, sir.'

'Very good. Secure.'

The captain stumped off the bridge, the officers following.

Kemp summoned the rating in charge of 'the echo-sounding machine and heard that it had been lined up and tested the night before. It was hardly likely that it had developed a fault since. He went back to the compass, took a long steady fix of the three points of land, and transferred them to the chart. The cocked hat remained. Kemp could not understand it. He knew the compass was accurate for he had checked it recently himself. Yet something was wrong somewhere. What?

Puzzling once more over the chart, Kemp's eye caught the hydrographic inscription in the corner. 'East Coast of South America,' it said, 'Cape Gampago to Belos Bay. Prepared for the Hydrographer of the Navy by Commander T. Brown and Lieutenant J. V. Walker, Her Majesty's Surveying Ship *Kite*, 1862.'

That the anchorage had not been resurveyed for nearly a hundred years was not, as Kemp knew, remarkable, for these waters were outside the track of regular shipping. Yet this very fact suggested that no large ship had visited the anchorage in recent times to confirm or deny the accuracy of the original survey. Was it not possible that a landslide or small volcanic eruption (no phenomena in these parts) had altered the character of the coast? Was the original survey no longer true? It was a bold thought, but a feasible one. Luckily there was a means of proving it. Kemp hurried down to the captain's cabin.

'Ah, Kemp!' Bathed, changed and exhilarated by the prospect of twenty-four hours in harbour, the captain was in benevolent mood. 'A glass of sherry?'

'Thank you, sir.'

'Well, have you sorted out that muddle?'

'No, sir, but I've thought of a way of doing so.'

‘What’s that?’

‘Making a fresh survey of the bay myself, sir. I think the chart is wrong.’

‘Do you indeed? That’s very interesting. We must leave for Bermuda this time tomorrow, you know. Do you think you can manage it in the time?’

‘Well enough, sir.’

‘Well, go ahead and good luck to you. If you’re right, it’ll be a great feather in your cap.’

After an early lunch, and accompanied by two midshipmen, four ratings and a variety of nautical instruments, Kemp set out in the whaler to survey the anchorage. It was an afternoon of intense heat. Most of the clouds had disappeared and the sun burnt fiercely from a blue sky. The *Apollo*’s awnings had been spread and beneath them the crew lay sprawled in slumber. Kemp’s ratings, who had thought to be among them, smouldered at their oars. Even the enthusiasm of the youthful midshipmen soon dissolved in the runnels of sweat that dripped from their foreheads on the sextant-lenses. Only Kemp, inspired with the missionary zeal of a St. John Rivers, looked to his labours with unflagging devotion. This was the opportunity he had been seeking and he was determined to make the most of it. All afternoon his voice went echoing round the bay, issuing a stream of instructions to his harassed associates. All afternoon and evening the little party applied themselves to his commands, now taking soundings from the whaler, now measuring angles and distances from the shore. And when the sun had set behind the mountains inland and dusk had come swiftly upon the anchorage, they had not returned to the ship.

* * *

‘Mummy?’

‘Yes, darling.’

‘Who’s that man?’

‘A friend of Mummy’s.’

‘Why’s he always here?’

‘Because it’s nice for Mummy to have someone to talk to when Daddy’s away.’

‘But you can talk to me and Nicholas and Peter and Paul.’

‘He’s a grown-up, darling. It’s different, you see . . .’

‘Do you like him?’

'Very much.'

'Does Daddy like him?'

'Daddy doesn't know him.'

'Would Daddy like him if he did know him?'

'I don't know really. Yes, I expect so.'

'Mummy, where's Daddy now?'

'Oh, my darling, what a lot of questions.'

'Where do you think he is. What do you think he's doing?
This minute.'

'I think he's in a beautiful town in South America where there are fountains playing in the square, having lots to eat and drink and being looked after by hundreds of lovely ladies.'

★ ★ ★

They returned to the ship at midnight. One midshipman and two ratings were suffering from sun-burn and had to be taken away to the sick-bay; the others were in lesser stages of exhaustion. A relief crew was detailed for duty in the morning. Several officers volunteered to take Kemp's place but he would not hear of it. This was his property and he wanted no trespassers. Also he remembered Drake having said that it was not the beginning but the continuing of the same until it was finished that yielded the true glory. Early in the morning he embarked in the whaler with his new crew. They were away three hours, returned to the ship for breakfast and a fresh midshipman and were out again half an hour later. All morning they struggled in the heat to have the survey completed before the time of sailing. Their efforts were finally successful. Twenty minutes before the sea dutymen were piped to their stations, the last distance had been measured, the last sounding taken.

Late in the afternoon, when the anchorage was a blue smudge astern and the *Apollo* was ploughing northwards through the long easy swell, Kemp emerged from the charthouse and walked briskly to the captain's cabin.

'Well, Kemp, how did it go?'

'Very well, sir. The Admiralty chart is definitely at fault. Would you like to see?'

He spread the survey and the chart side by side on the table.

'Now, sir, you can see that while the shape of the bay is almost identically the same in both, there are several noticeable differences. For instance the two headlands on the Admiralty chart

are much longer than on mine—than in fact they really are. Then the Admiralty chart gives the height of the hill at the head of the bay as forty-three feet. I make it only thirty-one. Then again the depths of water vary considerably. Taking it all round, the Admiralty depths are about two feet more than mine.'

'Did you have a good leadsman?'

'Robinson, sir. I'd trust him anywhere.'

'Can you think of any explanation?'

'Yes, sir. I've studied the East Coast of South America Pilot and there's definite evidence of land erosion in these parts. It's my view that owing to the action of the sea, the level of the coast is gradually subsiding. This would account for the shortened length of the headlands and the reduced stature of the hill. As the soil is eaten away by the sea, it forms a deposit on the ocean-bed, and this would explain the difference in soundings. I noticed there was mud on the anchor this afternoon.'

'Well, that's very interesting, Kemp. You seem to have done a good job.'

'Thank you, sir.'

'We must whip this in to the Hydrographer. He'll be as pleased as Punch.'

'Yes, sir.'

There was a moment's pause and then the captain said, 'I tell you what. I don't want to submit this in the name of the ship because it's not something I ordered. You did this off your own bat and any credit that's going should be yours. You submit a fair copy of the survey officially to me and I'll send it on to the Hydrographer with a covering letter. How's that?'

'That's very good of you, sir.'

'Good, that's settled, then.' He added, rather shyly, 'I hope it gets to Their Lordships before the July promotions.'

* * *

'Hubert?'

'Yes, love.'

'Such a sweet letter from Kempy this morning.'

'What's he say?'

'I can't quite make it out. He's done something frightfully clever in some bay in Brazil. He says it'll make all the difference to his promotion.'

'Good for him!'

'If everything goes all right, he says, we'll be able to move out of this house. That will be a blessing.'

'Yes.'

'He is sweet, you know. He's so tremendously enthusiastic about whatever he's doing. I do love the old boy. It's funny when you think how little we've got in common. But I really do.'

'Well, of course.'

'I love you both, you see. In quite different ways. I want to protect him.'

'And me?'

'You!' she said suddenly. 'I want to eat you.'

Later Nicholas, who had been playing pirates unobserved in the corner, said to Jonathan, 'Mummy wants to eat that man. I heard her say so.'

* * *

It was a warm afternoon at the beginning of June. The *Apollo* lay at anchor in a large bay on the west coast of Newfoundland. Beneath the awnings, the ship slept. Most of the officers were ashore, some on a fishing expedition up Harry's River, others to visit the papermills at Corner Brook. Kemp was not with them. He lay in a deck-chair on the quarter-deck, his eyes half closed, a novel of Bartimeus lying face downwards on his lap. Nearly a month had elapsed since the fair copy of the survey had been despatched by air from Bermuda, and the Hydrographer's reply was expected daily. In the ship the survey had been much praised. The captain had said, 'That's a fine job of work you've done there, Kemp'. The doctor, who didn't know the difference between El Greco and Van Gogh, had called it a work of art. Even Boy Briggs who had glimpsed it on a message to the charthouse, had described it to his messmates as smashing. Everyone agreed that it represented Kemp's last bid for promotion and because they liked him and wished him well, they were as keen about its outcome as he. Kemp himself was quietly optimistic. He believed with an inner certainty that his promotion was now secure. He wished that Laura could be with him when the news came through. He thought of all the drudgery and discomfort she had borne with such patience during the past ten years. He was immensely grateful to her. Before taking up his new appointment he would be given two or three weeks' leave. He thought that if he could find someone to look after the boys, he would

take Laura away for a holiday. He wondered where she would choose to go and made a mental list of several likely places. He speculated on the nature of his appointment and hoped that it would be to a shore base in England. Which one? Lost in a reverie of pleasing thoughts, Kemp let the volume of Bartimeus fall from his lap and closed his eyes in sleep.

Later he woke to hear the sound of aeroplane engines and a voice saying, 'Tell the officer of the watch that the mail plane's landing now'.

★ ★ ★

'Hubert?'

'Yes.'

'Something rather awful has happened.'

'What?'

'I don't quite know how to tell you.'

'Well, I won't bite.'

'I'm what's commonly called "in trouble".'

'Oh, dear. Are you quite certain?'

'Yes. I've known it was possible for some time. I hoped it might be a false alarm. I didn't want to worry you.'

'I am sorry.'

'Oh, it's not your fault. It's mine. I'm sometimes rather careless. It happened once before.'

'Well, don't worry. Leave it all to me.'

'I so terribly want to have it. It's yours, you see. Do you think that's awful of me?'

'I think it's very sweet and very flattering to me. But practically speaking, it's not possible.'

'No, I suppose so.'

He took her hand and said very gently, 'Promise not to worry and do what I say. I don't know about these things, but there's a man in the office who I think does. Promise to leave it to me.'

'Yes, all right, Hubert. You are sweet. Thank God Kempy's where he is. I think it would kill me if he knew.'

'There's no chance of that.'

★ ★ ★

Boy Briggs marched confidently along the upper deck, climbed the two ladders to the lower bridge and knocked at the chart-house door.

'Navigating Officer, sir?'

'Yes.'

'Captain would like to see you right away, sir.'

The captain was standing in the centre of his cabin, holding a sheet of paper in his hand. When Kemp said, 'You sent for me, sir', he averted his eyes and said nothing. There was a long pause. Kemp felt embarrassed. He did not know what was happening.

The captain said at last, 'I'm afraid I've got some bad news for you'. He added, 'It doesn't do me much good either'.

Kemp waited. There was another pause while the captain cleared his throat. Kemp saw that he was searching for words. He wanted to help but didn't know how to. Then the captain pushed the paper into Kemp's hands and said, 'You'd better read it yourself'.

Kemp took the paper. It was an airgraph despatch from the Admiralty. It said: 'To Commanding Officer *Apollo* from Admiralty. Reference survey stated to be of Belos Bay prepared by Lieutenant-Commander Kemp and submitted through C.O. to Hydrographer of Navy. This survey is an accurate transcription of Patagan Bay which is nine miles to the southward of Belos Bay. Their Lordships have no option but to conclude that *Apollo* was in Patagan Bay and not Belos Bay as stated. They view a navigational error of such magnitude with the gravest concern. Lieutenant-Commander Kemp is to be relieved of his duties forthwith and returned to the United Kingdom for disposal. An early report is requested.'

★ ★ ★

Kemp flew home by Clipper from Botwood two days later. The same evening Hubert, on his way to interview the man who knew about things, was told by his editor that the war in Saudi-Arabia had started and that he had exactly one hour to pack his bags and reach Northolt. That night both men were travelling eastwards at the rate of some 300 miles an hour, Kemp towards England and Laura, Hubert away from them. At a quarter to ten the next morning the situation was as follows. Kemp was in a telephone kiosk in Southampton trying to summon up the courage to break his news to Laura. Laura, after a sleepless night, was sitting by the telephone wondering why she hadn't heard from Hubert. And Hubert, not unmindful of what he had done and left undone, but believing that everything would work out all right in the end, was a remote speck over the blue Mediterranean.

GERALD BRENAN

NOVELIST-PHILOSOPHERS:

XIII—CERVANTES

CERVANTES has had the fate that periodically befalls all the Old Masters. The varnish has accumulated so thickly on his canvas that we can no longer see the original colours or brushwork. We look and turn away—a famous but boring masterpiece. Yet in recent years the cleaners have been at work. One has only to read Sr Madariaga's study—to name but one example—to realize that *Don Quixote* is an extremely subtle, though imperfect, book. So subtle, so slippery even under its air of *bonhomie* that the critic who sets out to write on it finds difficulties of all sorts awaiting him. I will do the best I can, approaching the subject in skirmishing fashion from a number of different angles and leaving to others the direct attack on the centre. Perhaps in this way I may succeed in removing yet a little more of the grime of misunderstanding and tradition that prevents us from reading this most psychological of novels by the light of the twentieth century.

Let us first see what sort of a man Cervantes was. Born in 1547 near Madrid, the son of an apothecary surgeon with seven children, he had an early introduction to poverty with its harsh routine of pawnshop, money-lender and prison. In spite of this, however, he was able to obtain a fair education—first, it is thought, at Seville and then at the city school of Madrid. Here his master was one of the last of the old humanists and followers of Erasmus; we hear of the young man, just twenty-one, writing a poem which this master singled out for praise and have reason for thinking that his influence was an important one.

A desire to see the world now took him to Italy. At Naples he joined a Spanish regiment as a private soldier and fought in the great sea battle of Lepanto, where he lost the use of his left hand. Other engagements followed. Then, on his way back to Spain with letters recommending his promotion, he was captured by the Moors and taken to Algiers. Here he spent five years as a slave. When at length he was ransomed, his daring in planning escapes and in taking the blame for them when they failed had given him

the sort of reputation reserved in our day for the heroes of the Resistance.

Back in Spain at the age of thirty-three, he suffered the common experience of soldiers in peacetime: his war services had been forgotten and no one was interested in his Moorish exploits. He decided to take up literature. With his usual energy he began at once to write a pastoral novel, a number of comedies for the Madrid stage and a quantity of verses. Let us consider these for a moment. Cervantes thought of literature as most great writers have done at the commencement of their careers—as something that expresses ideal states and desires rather than experiences. Moreover, this was the general opinion of that time in literary circles: the current was running strongly against realism. Writing a pastoral novel was the obvious and natural thing for a young man to do, especially if he was in love, and though we cannot read *Galatea* today, we can see that he learned some of the balance and mellowness of his later style from it. His poetry is another matter. To the end of his life Cervantes wished more than anything else in the world to be recognized as a poet. He never was, and his steady output of fluent verses did little to help his literary reputation.

There was then the drama. This belonged to a category that had less prestige, because it was popular. But Cervantes had been deeply interested in it since he had watched the primitive performances of Lope de Rueda as a boy. Here again, however, 'literature' interfered. The Spanish drama was a new art waiting to be born: it needed a man who should combine a quick responsiveness to popular taste with a romantic imagination and some poetry to set it on its proper course. But Cervantes brought only a little Senecan rhetoric and a novelist's tempo: if his comedies held the stage, that was merely because, until Lope de Vega came along a few years later, there was nothing better to choose from. The real trouble, however, about all these literary ventures was that they brought in no money. The reign of Philip II was a reign in which writers starved. Cervantes therefore gave up authorship towards 1585 and took a job at Seville, first as a commissary for requisitioning corn and oil for the Government, and then as a tax collector. This move was the easier because his private life had just taken a new turn: a love affair which had given him an illegitimate daughter had been succeeded by a marriage to a girl

of nineteen, who owned a house and a few acres of land not far from Madrid. But the marriage proved to be a failure and after a few months the couple separated. To all intents and purposes Cervantes, who seems to have had little power of pleasing women, was once more a bachelor.

The next twenty years find him leading a roving, harassed, impecunious life, mostly in Andalusia. Here, on long mule-back journeys, on the benches of crowded posadas, haggling over prices, he wore out the best years of his middle age. There were frequent money difficulties, for he was not paid regularly: there were law suits, for he was rash and unbusinesslike, and, above all, there was the terrible question of a deficit, in which, owing to a bank failure and to the fecklessness he may have inherited from a Micawberish father, he lost a large sum of Government money that had been entrusted to him. This led to a period of acute poverty and to at least one spell of imprisonment. One may judge his social position from the fact that, though his headquarters during most of this time was Seville, he seems never to have known any of the distinguished group of writers and poets who lived there. Yet he never gave up. Elderly, shabby, obscure, disreputable, pursued by debts, with only a noisy tenement room to work in, he was still, in whatever spare time he could find, carrying on his unescapable vocation of literature. We owe *Don Quixote*, as we owe Joyce's *Ulysses*, to its author's having been a man of quite extraordinary persistence and optimism.

For Cervantes had never entirely stopped writing. The things he found it easiest to do were verse plays, and all through the nineties he was turning out *comedias* for the theatre at Seville. But Lope de Vega's new technique was making his pieces look stilted and old-fashioned. With more leisure now that he had lost his job, he took up again the art of novel writing and began to compose those short stories which he published later under the title of *Exemplary Novels*. They were of different sorts, some being romances in the Italian style, others pictures of criminal life at Seville, others again sketches of extraordinary events or characters, taken from actual life. One of the subjects that most interested him was madness. This was a taste of the time: the liking for calm and ideal scenes and generalized characters was giving place to a craving for the bizarre and extraordinary. The idea came to him—actually he seems to have taken it from an *entremés* or one-act

play—to write a short story about an amusing madman who imagined himself to be a knight errant, carrying on the feats recorded in the novels of chivalry. The date is thought to have been 1597, when Cervantes was fifty: the place, as he half tells us himself, a prison—probably that of Seville—and the title *Don Quixote de la Mancha*. Its first part, for it grew into a long book, came out in 1605.

Never, perhaps, before or since has a writer had such an extraordinary stroke of luck. The vein Cervantes had hit on was not only a wonderfully rich and productive one, leading to unexpected depths and possibilities, but it was one which he himself was peculiarly fitted to explore. So from the first chapter, with its plain and balanced portrait of the hero, we get a feeling of assurance: in the second, with Don Quixote's arrival at the inn and mistaking it for a castle and coming out with one of his magniloquent speeches, we begin to have some idea of the delicious consequences that could be drawn from his madness. But Cervantes had not yet hit on the device that would enable him to realize the full possibilities of his theme. The knight alone was not a sufficiently strong thread on which to string the incidents. It took a few chapters for him to discover this: then, bringing his hero home, he sent him out again with Sancho Panza. After that there are no more hesitations: master and man by their wonderful powers of conversation are sufficient to sustain the interest. It is this duality of heroes that turns what would otherwise be a short entertaining story into a long and very great book.

Don Quixote was conceived in prison at a low watermark in Cervantes's life, and he tells us that in writing it he 'gave play to his melancholy and disgruntled feelings'. Something more than a skit on the novels of chivalry must have been intended. I think, therefore, that we ought to take note of the fact that the famous knight had many features in common with his creator. We learn, for example, that Don Quixote was of the same age as Cervantes when he set out on his adventures, and that he had the same physical appearance: we read of his wits being dry and sterile and his head turned by too much reading, just as we are told in the preface that his author's were. Moreover, he was an incorrigible optimist and idealist who set out to reform the world by force of arms and instead was beaten by it. Must not this, or something like it, have been Cervantes's view of his own

history? It is true that these similarities are accompanied by even greater dissimilarities. But if the writer was in some sense 'putting himself' into his hero, that is precisely what we should expect. When novelists seek to create characters who will represent the deepest things in themselves, they start by delineating something very different. It is by wearing masks that one obtains freedom of self-expression. I suggest therefore that one of the sources of Don Quixote's power to move us comes from his being a projection of a discarded part of Cervantes himself: that is to say, of the noble intentions and failure of his life. It is for this reason that the irony in this most ironical of books has often the deep and searching quality of self-irony. It accounts too for that curious animosity against his hero which, as Sr Madariaga has pointed out, often seems to harden Cervantes's pen. When he thought of the harm his generous illusions had done him, he felt bitterly and took it out on the figure who represented them. But he was not the kind of man to remain embittered for long: his temperament was too buoyant, besides which the zest of such triumphant creation naturally made him well disposed to the most successful of his characters. The result is an ambivalence of attitude that runs through the book and adds to its complexity. Among other things it helps to determine what sort of life Don Quixote is to be allowed at each moment—whether the daemonic vitality of the puppet (that sure sign of his projection from great depths) or the wise and mature reflections that come direct from Cervantes's experience and reading. That is to say, in so far as Cervantes intended the figure of Don Quixote to stand for anything, it was quite simply for the man who ruins himself and others by his romantic and generous illusions and by his over-confidence in the goodness of human nature. If this conception is somewhat deepened in the second part, we must at least be careful not to read into the text, as some people have done, a political or social allegory on the Spain of Philip II.

But let us look at the book itself and forget the writer. We see then the knight and his squire wandering across Spain in search of adventures, the road they take picked out for them by the whim of Rozinante, the only horse in literature to have a character. As they go they talk—never was there a book so full of discussion and argument—yet their conversation does not, as in most novels, appear to further the progress of the plot, but is concentrated

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round the great fantastical theme of knight errantry. We watch the fluctuations of Don Quixote's far from robust faith, the wonderful crop of rationalizations by which he defends and preserves it, the effects of all this on Sancho, the constantly shifting relations of the pair to one another, and last, the gradual weakening of the knight's belief in himself, with his death when it fails and returns him to the empty state of sanity. This rake's progress of the believing man, passing from the wealth of total conviction to the bankruptcy of utter scepticism, with its deep pathos and sadness, has been so well brought out and analysed in Sr Madariaga's brilliant study that I shall not attempt to recapitulate it.¹ But *Don Quixote* is a complex and even a baffling book, presenting many different facets. Let us therefore try to approach it from some other angles.

We spoke just now of the felicity of the general theme. One of its merits is the way in which, in every incident that comes along, it stimulates the reader's interest. It does this by providing a series of fixed contrasts that set up between them a tension. For example, there is the contrast between the actual situation and what it appears to be to Don Quixote: there is that between his noble and exalted way of feeling and Sancho's peasant shrewdness and self-interest: and, if one likes, that between the knight's wise and sane ratiocinations and his violent fantasies whenever the subject of chivalry enters his head. Every situation that turns up brings at least two of these into play, and the reader is kept in suspense until he knows precisely how it will be decided. By this means the weakness inherent in the picaresque form—a chain of events loosely strung together—is overcome and the greatest concentration brought to bear on each incident. Note, too—a stylistic contrast—that this madness of the principal character has a language of its own: the archaic magniloquence of the books of chivalry provides a sort of upper floor of pomp and imagery standing above the ordinary idiom of the book. This was a great discovery, made possible by the example of Ariosto in *Orlando Furioso*. For one feels not only the delicious irony of the knight-errantly speeches, but also the beauty of a stately feudal language rising out of the plain and habitable level of Cervantes's prose.

¹ *Don Quixote. An Introductory Essay in Psychology.* By Salvador de Madariaga. 1934.

The point about which everything in the book revolves is, of course, Don Quixote's madness. Among other things it raises—and not simply in the obvious way—the question of the nature of Truth. At first we may say to ourselves that there is no real problem here: the Knight of the Doleful Countenance is mad, and that's that. But presently it dawns on us that his madness is confined to one thing—the belief, not itself irrational by the standards of that age—that the books of chivalry were true histories. Once this is granted, it was no more mad for him to attempt to revive the profession of knight-errantry than it was for a monk to imitate the Fathers of the Desert. Now the innkeeper, who was perfectly sane, also believed in the truth of the books of chivalry, though since the things described in them had never fallen within his experience, he drew the (purely empirical) deduction that they had ceased to take place. What caused the two men to disagree was not therefore any greater degree of rationality on one side than on the other, but simply a difference of propensity or inclination. Don Quixote had a strong desire to play a noble and heroic part in life—to right wrongs and assist the unfortunate, and by so doing become famous—whereas the innkeeper was content to take the world as he found it so long as he could go on cheating it. The knight's madness is thus the direct consequence of his nobility of character whilst the innkeeper's sanity is due to his being common-place.

We can explain Sancho's mixture of belief and disbelief in precisely the same way. When he is in the believing mood, it is because he is under the double influence of Don Quixote's superior rhetoric and of his own greed and ambition; and when he is sceptical it is because he lacks his master's sense of a high vocation as well as his years of browsing among the books of chivalry. For once one grants the historical character of those books, the feats of enchanters in changing the appearance of things in order to thwart knight-errants become just as credible as those of the devils and witches in which, in theory at least, everyone believed. It is thus inexact to speak of Don Quixote as lacking in shrewdness or being gullible by nature. His delusion is the result of a long, secretly sustained wish to rise above the dullness of his monotonous life, have adventures and distinguish himself. But Cervantes, in presenting to us his epistemological riddle, has gone further. For not only has he made his knight nobler and, for all his craving

for renown, more disinterested than any of the persons who are shown to us as sane, but he has made him more intelligent. A good example of this will be found in those delicious passages where Don Quixote pours out a flood of subtle and convincing arguments to support a view that anyone can see is erroneous. His mind works more lucidly when it has a worse case to defend. If we stop to think a moment, we may well wonder where the author is taking us.

As we have said, the making of the novel lies in its having two contrasted heroes or principal characters—Don Quixote and Sancho. The best parts, those passages one reads again and again with never-failing delight, are the conversations between them. One represents altruism, the other self-interest: one wisdom and learning, the other the practical intelligence: one is mad and the other is sane. And yet—this is an example of the subtle quality of Cervantes's observation—as the book progresses, they are constantly affecting and even invading one another. The simple contrast between them with which it started breaks down and we get what Sr Madariaga has called the sanchification of Don Quixote and the quixotification of Sancho. This leads to moments in which they almost appear to have changed places.

Such, it might be said, are the ordinary effects of living together. But the spell, the ideology, that binds them is important, too. Whether one thinks of them as two partners of a firm dealing in futures, or as two members of a sect who must gather the rewards of their faith in this world (glory pure and simple for the one, wealth and power for the other), they march forward side by side, talking and arguing all the time, with their eyes fixed on the distance. This at least is the position in the Second Part, where Sancho's self-importance swells out till at moments he feels himself the equal, or superior even, of his master. It is then that one comes across those touches of mutual jealousy and rivalry—Don Quixote showing peevishness when Sancho is given his island, Sancho discovering for the first time the Quixotic pleasures of fame and glory—that make this book such a continually unfolding revelation of human nature. Once more one sees what treasures of subtlety and irony a theme based on simple contrasts can throw into the lap of a discerning novelist.

But perhaps the relationship between the pair may best after all be compared to that most intimate of partnerships, marriage.

The long dialogue between them that takes up the principal part of the book suggests, in a more ceremonious key, the familiar dialogue of married couples. It is made up of the same inconclusive wranglings, the same recriminations and *tu quoques*, the same fixed recollections and examples dragged out again and again from the past to clinch an argument. Thus the fact that Sancho was tossed in a blanket early on in their travels and that his master failed to rescue him and, to conceal his impotence, put the whole thing down to the work of enchanters, is brought up by the squire every time the question of enchantments is raised in the course of the book. It is one of the two rocks upon which his unbelief, when he is in the unbelieving mood, is founded. Just as in married life, every disagreement leads back to some classic precedent or 'You said so and so'.

And this has the effect of lacing together in an extraordinary way the various incidents. One of the most admirable things about this novel, which at first sight seems to be composed of a number of separate episodes, strung together like beads on a thread, is that few things in it are really finished with when they have occurred. On the contrary, they are taken up into the minds of the two protagonists and reappear later on as a part of their argument. This not only gives the plot a greater unity, but it makes it more subtle. Every striking event has, as it were, a succession of echoes and it is these echoes that make the book what it is. It would be hard to find a novel in which the psychological repercussions of happenings had a greater importance.

We have suggested that the relations of the knight to his squire have some resemblance to those of a married couple. And this comparison has perhaps more to it than might appear at first sight. In their peripatetic *ménage*, Don Quixote plays the part of the unmitigated male and Sancho that of the semi-dependant female. Hence the long story of Sancho's fidelities and infidelities, which is one of the most revealing things in the book. How true to life, too, it is that, as the spiritual potency of the male declines, the female should rise and spread herself and dominate! Through almost the whole of the second part it is Sancho who is the leading figure and in the last chapters we see him, in spite of his touching devotion to his master, getting ready for a prosperous widowhood. The knight dies as all men die, when—sane, empty, deflated—he has fulfilled his role of impregnator. In this capacity one might

say that Sancho symbolizes the passive and feminine world, which requires heroes and men of ideas to fertilize it.

But to return to the text—for the temptation to allegorical interpretation must be resisted—let us note how all the interest is deliberately concentrated upon these two. The outer world, in the form of innkeepers, muleteers, duchesses, distressed damsels and so forth, is brought in only to provide incentives, to put them through their paces.¹ In itself it is of no consequence: what alone matters is the performance of the preposterous couple and the discussion on the nature of reality and on the means of apprehending it that their mishaps invariably give rise to. It is not, of course, a purely philosophic discussion: rather it is a marvellous display of human prejudices, delusions, doubts, sagacity, stupidity, self-deception, shrewdness, arranged by a master of ironic perception to delight us by its contradictions and incompatibilities. We watch the give and take with all the amused superiority and detachment of people who see through the disputants' motives and know the real answers. And then, with a shock of surprise, we realize that, even though these particular answers may be known to us, we are looking on at a puppet show in which the puppets represent ourselves and that it is our own faith and doubt and certainty and ignorance that are being shown to us.

That is why we can speak of the profundity of this book: the *gracia* of some particular remark by Don Quixote or Sancho sets up a pulse of delight that goes echoing through our minds and drawing out our thoughts towards their frontiers. We scarcely need to ask how far the author intended this. It is in the nature of poets to say more than they know, and Cervantes was carried by the current of the theme he had discovered far out of his depth. How could he have supposed that, in revealing the psychological mechanism of one particular faith, it was necessarily faith

¹ Cervantes tells us that he often found the boredom of keeping the light focused on his two heroes intolerable. For this reason he introduced pastoral episodes, where they took a back seat. But his readers objected to this. In the Second Part, therefore, he allowed the plot gradually to lose all pretence of naturalness and to become a machine for producing situations that would extract every drop of humorous reaction from the pair. If this injures the unity of tone of the book, as the practical joking of the Duke and Duchess certainly does, it gives us in exchange a rich and complex development of the two principal characters such as the more cumbersome plot evolution of the naturalistic novel can rarely furnish.

in general, and even the possibility of knowledge that he was questioning: His book is one that will be reinterpreted by every age because it is continually suggesting very much more than it says.

And yet we cannot escape from this question of intention so easily. Here we have a writer, who in all his other works seems so limited in imagination, producing effects of a subtlety that make most other novelists appear crude. The natural properties of the theme are not in themselves enough to account for it: only an artist of abnormal fineness of perception could have made use of its powers of suggestion as he has done. But this seems to demand an illustration. I will take the adventure of Montesinos's Cave, which is one of the high-water marks of the book.

Montesinos is a knight who figures in a number of Spanish ballads that deal with the Carolingian legends. The most famous of these shows him following the blood-stained trail of his friend and cousin, the paladin Durandarte, as he flees from the field of Roncevalles. After crossing the greater part of France at the gallop, he comes up with him near Paris. The paladin is lying mortally wounded *debajo una verde haya*, under a green beech tree, and with his last breath adjures him to cut out his heart with his dagger and to carry it to his lady Belerma, whom he had served for seven years without success. Montesinos does this, Belerma weeps tears of pure blood and faints—*vencido de un gran desmayo*.

The absurdity of the story and its great popularity had some time before tempted Góngora to write a parody of it. A cave by the ruined castle of Rocafriada in La Mancha was known as Montesinos's Cave. What could be more natural than that Cervantes should lead his hero to the place? And so, in Chapter XXII of the Second Part he does. The knight arrives, accompanied by Sancho and another person, and after an invocation of exquisite absurdity to Dulcinea (it suggests a parody of one to the Virgin) is lowered on a rope down the shaft and at the end of half an hour is pulled up again unconscious. His companions revive him, he sits up and asks for food. As soon as he has eaten he describes his experiences.

These really amount—as we can see but he could not—to his having had an extraordinary dream. On reaching the bottom of the cave, so he tells us, he swooned and then, opening his eyes, found himself in a green meadow, at the end of which stood a

castle whose walls seemed to be made of transparent crystal. As he looked at it, its gates opened and out of them came a venerable old man, clad in a long mulberry gown with a white beard that fell below his waist and—an absurd touch—a rosary whose every tenth bead was as large as a 'middle-sized ostrich egg'. Greeting Don Quixote by name, he told him that he and those who dwelt in these enchanted solitudes had long been awaiting his arrival, for it was to his invincible heart and prodigious spirit that the task of delivering them had been reserved. And he informed him that he was Montesinos.

A conversation followed in which Don Quixote questioned him about the events described in the ballad and Montesinos replied, correcting the text in one instance: in removing his cousin's heart from his body, he said, he had used a fine poignard and not a dagger. They then entered the palace and in a hall paved with alabaster came to a magnificent tomb. On the top of it lay the figure of a man made, not of bronze or marble, but of flesh and bone. 'This', declared Montesinos, 'is my friend Durandarte, flower and mirror of all the valiant knights and lovers of his day and kept here by the enchanter Merlin.' And he went on to relate once more the scene of his death, giving, as guides do, certain prosaic details, such as that his heart weighed at least two pounds. On this a surprising thing occurred: Durandarte in a loud voice, as if mechanically repeating a part, began to recite the actual words attributed to him by the ballad. On which his cousin knelt down and with streaming eyes assured him that his commands had been carried out, that his heart, carefully salted to preserve it, had been carried to his lady Belerma, and that they all with their squires and attendants were waiting there to be released from their enchantment. 'And now', he continued, 'I have news to tell you, for here you see that doughty knight, Don Quixote de la Mancha, of whom so many things have been foretold, who has revived with greater glory than ever the forgotten order of knights-errant and by whose strength and valour it may well be that we shall be delivered from our enchantment.'

To which Durandarte in a hollow voice replied: 'And even if this were not so, O Cousin, even if this were not so, patience, I say, and shuffle the cards.' And turning over, he relapsed into his former silence.

We are now shown in charade the last scene mentioned in the

ballads—the procession of Belerma and her maidens, bearing Durandarte's heart and singing dirges. Their dress is strange and antiquated, for they wear black robes and white turbans, and Don Quixote with his matter-of-fact eye notes that Belerma is not the great beauty he had expected, but that she has a yellow colouring and lines under her eyes. Reading his thoughts, Montesinos explains that this is due not, as might be supposed, to her monthly periods—for it is many years since she had had them—but to her great grief. Otherwise one would see that even Dulcinea del Toboso scarcely equalled her in beauty.

After the tension caused by this *gaffe* has subsided—for Don Quixote was committed by his vows to maintaining in single combat that his lady excelled all other women in beauty—another dream charade begins. Dulcinea and her two maidens, dressed as common village girls, appear leaping and capering through the meadow like goats. This is a recollection of an incident that had occurred a few days previously, when Don Quixote and his squire had visited Toboso. Sancho, to conceal a previous deception of his, had pointed out three ugly village girls whom they had met riding on donkeys as being Dulcinea and her maidens, and had described their princess-like beauty and apparel. When the knight had protested that he saw only village girls, Sancho had assured him that that must be because he had been put under an enchantment. Rather unwillingly Don Quixote had accepted his explanation. It is for this reason that they appear in his dream in this form. They caper past, and Dulcinea turns her back rudely when he speaks to her. But now a very odd thing happens. No sooner have they gone than one of the maidens returns and approaches him. On behalf of her mistress she asks for a small loan—six *reals*, as security for which she offers a dimity petticoat. Don Quixote gives her all he has—four: the girl, instead of a curtsy, leaps six feet in the air and goes off. On this Montesinos offers some plausible reasons for their enchantment and the knight's account of his dream ends. During the three days and nights he has spent underground, he has seen and learned, he says, an infinite number of marvels, but he postpones their description to another occasion.

Let us now look at this adventure of the Cave a little more closely. At first sight it may seem to be just one more mock-heroic episode in the style of Ariosto. A chapter from a

Graallegend story, which without losing all its poetic strangeness and beauty has been brought down to earth and made ridiculous by a number of small touches. But how is it that these touches are given us by, of all people, Don Quixote? One explanation is that we have here the author's satirical humour breaking out through the mouth of his hero and making him parody himself. But this surely is to neglect Cervantes's perfectly clear statement that he was giving us Don Quixote's vision or dream. And, in fact, a dream atmosphere of wonderful verisimilitude envelops the whole chapter and gives to these absurd touches—which, if they were intrusions of the author's wit, would surely strike a false note—their peculiarly subtle flavour. Since this is, as we already know, a psychological novel, we must expect this dream to throw some new light upon Don Quixote's character. Let us see if it does so.

The magic castle, the enchanted Montesinos and his speech of welcome require no special interpretation: They are part of the knight's romantic fantasy and of his boundless self-esteem, and therefore already familiar to us. But note the realistic touches: the correction over the dagger, the weight of the heart, the speculation upon the yellowness of Belerma's skin, and so forth. These affect us not merely by their sudden reduction of high romance to the crudest reality: their comedy is finer than that, for it consists in their being indications of a fundamental dryness and prosaicness in the mind of this man who has set himself up against the prosaic scheme of things. It is a quality we have noted in him before, but which, in the freer atmosphere of the dream, takes on a greater latitude.

There is then that disconcerting remark of the recumbent Durandarte. Not only does he express doubt about the ability of Don Quixote to release him from his enchantment, but he puts his doubt into a popular proverb, 'Patience and shuffle the cards', which startles us by its cynical inappropriateness. We are reminded of some of the remarks of the Red Queen in *Alice in Wonderland*.¹

The incident of Dulcinea's maid asking for the loan of a few

¹Durandarte had reasons that were not known to Cervantes for taking a cynical view of knight-errantry. He owed his own existence to a misunderstanding about Durendal, the name given in the French *Chansons de geste* to Roland's sword, which some Spanish jongleur had taken to be a person.

shillings is another example of the same enigmatic inconsequence. There is, of course, an insinuation under it. Many of the fair ladies of Madrid and Seville must have been in the habit of treating elderly gallants in just this way—only, of course, the ‘loans’ they asked for were considerably larger. But the incident has been caught up and absorbed into the dream, so that the insinuation is felt to be, not a satirical stroke of the author’s, but a subversive whisper that has come from some small voice in Don Quixote himself. A whisper reminding the dreamer that, if any Dulcinea is ready to listen to his advances, it will be because she is mercenary.

We get then, through the device of a dream, an oblique yet penetrating glimpse into the deeper layer of Don Quixote’s mind. We see that his knight-errantly fantasy, even in its moment of triumph, when freed by sleep from all the trammels of reality, has not achieved the conquest of every portion of his mind. There is a dry matter-of-factness that contrasts oddly with it and which one guesses may originally have led him, by its very dullness, to take this escape. And there is also the voice of common sense and reason, living on like a fifth column within him, disguised and in hiding, yet ready to seize every suitable opportunity for sabotage. One does not need to have read modern books of psychology to recognize the symptoms as they show themselves in the dream language, or the delicate exactness with which Cervantes has recorded their appearance.

There remains the question, how could a Spanish writer of the seventeenth century have such an understanding of the secret processes of the mind? The answer is, no doubt, that the instinct of a writer of genius may lead him a long way if he is prepared to trust himself to it freely. But a certain social climate is required if he is to be given the encouragement to do this. I believe that this climate existed in the peculiar kind of wit or humour for which Seville, and, indeed, most of Andalusia, is famous, and which is known as *gracia*. It is the humour of an imaginative people given over to the charms of social life in an easy climate, with the spectator’s attitude to what goes on round them and little sense of responsibility. Description being impossible, I will only say that one of its features is a disinterested delight in the absurd (English and French humour have generally some moral implications), and another, an Oriental love of double meanings, of suggestion rather than statement, of ambiguity and subtlety used

for their own sake. And all expressed in that tone of slyness and ironic reserve known as *discreción*. It was on this humour, if I am right, that Cervantes drew what drafts he needed for his many-storied novel, so that what to our minds seem far-reaching innuendoes, full of metaphysical or psychological import, were often in their original intention mere humorous contrasts and whimsicalities, intended for immediate delight yet all the more agreeable to their readers because they contained unexplored possibilities of interpretation. To an author who chose his theme well, this Andalusian *gracia* gave an unusual opportunity for working his conscious and unconscious faculties in harness, and on, as it were, two levels. Not in vain, we may say, had Cervantes spent so many years beside what an earlier poet had called *las aguas del río sutil Sevillano*, 'the waters of the subtle Seville river'.

We have seen that *Don Quixote* grew out of Cervantes's long and painful experiences of frustration and failure. It thus deals with one of the classic themes of Spanish literature—disillusion. Spaniards, who commonly set their hopes too high and expect a miracle to fulfill them, often come to feel themselves deceived by life. Cervantes had also started off in a very optimistic frame of mind, but it had become too much a part of his nature to be given up. It will be remembered that we spoke of his having been educated by a schoolmaster who had Erasmist leanings. Now there is very much in his novel that calls up the humanistic spirit of Charles V's reign. There is the Renaissance notion of the perfection of Nature and of the supremacy of Reason: there is the optimistic attitude to life and the common-sense morality, without a trace of mysticism. Most significant of all is the absence of any sign of belief in original sin. This dogma, which expressed in theological terms the sense that there is a sort of inertia limiting the growth of reason and virtue in human beings, had lain dormant through the Middle Ages to burst up with terrifying force among the Lutherans and Calvinists. From them it had spread to Spain, carried in a modified form by the Jesuits. But in Cervantes we do not come across any trace of it. He remained what one might call a natural Liberal, living on in an age when the last spark of the Liberal spirit was dead. It is for this reason that he seems to have been regarded by his contemporaries as a man of old-fashioned views, half pedant and half, as we should say, Victorian, writing in a smooth, balanced style that had dated. And that, of course, is

precisely one of the reasons why he is alive to us. We only partly understand the Southern baroque writers, though we find them exciting. They lived in a tight, guilt-ridden world, turned in on itself and alternating between a superficial hedonism and a profound pessimism. Although in some respects it was like our own, it differed by having a certain stifling feeling in its air that was the result of the steady decrease of intellectual liberty. But Erasmus joins hands across a gulf with the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. It is the background of his reasonableness and moderation that makes Cervantes a universal writer, as Calderon and Quevedo for all their genius could never be. Indeed, it was in the countries north of the Pyrenees that his greatness was first recognized at a time when south of them his novel was still regarded as light literature.

One qualification. *Don Quixote*, as we have seen, came into the world like Montaigne's *Essays*, on the last wave of humanistic feeling and values. Yet it has seventeenth-century features. The hero himself belongs to the violent dreamworld of baroque hagiography. He is first cousin to the ecstatic saints of Zurbarán or Ribera, though painted without chiaroscuro and in comic guise. He is martyred under our eyes and by our laughter. The whole tendency of the book, too, with its epistemological queries and its psychological subtleties proclaims a more complex age than that of the Renaissance. We should remember this in speaking of Cervantes's dependence on the past.

Cervantes's powers of comic invention are bound up with his skill in using language to convey fine shades of feeling. One example of this is the tone of his narrative passages. He is the first prose-writer, I think, to understand that, in telling a story, one must gain the attention and confidence of the reader by one's manner. How he does this is more easily felt than described. But open *Don Quixote* almost anywhere and one will see how by the mere intonation, as it were, of his sentences he conveys a deliberation and assurance, a sense of being completely at ease with his audience that one does not find in earlier writers. Sometimes this is carried too far for modern taste, which does not like any trace of showmanship in its literary entertainers. But, generally speaking, the zest and enjoyment of the man and his assumption that you are going to enjoy yourself too give one an appetite to go on reading him. Then he is a master—and what a great one!—of the

art of dialogue. It was only to be expected that he should have done this well, because one of the particular pleasures to be derived from his book comes from the continual victories we witness of words over facts. Some new situation arises which we know that Don Quixote must interpret in accordance with his peculiar fantasy, and we wait to see how he will do it. Then, no sooner has his interpretation been given, than the inevitable insurmountable objection is made by Sancho or another person, and at once the question is how he will get round it. That he always does so, and far better than one could have hoped, and in quite unsuspected ways, is due not only to his ingenuity in argument, supported by the wide range of his mind and reading, but to his remarkable rhetorical powers. The knight, who loses every time he takes to the sword, wins a battle whenever he opens his mouth. But the battle won by Cervantes is greater still, because he must not only take care of his hero's dialectic, but also convey to us, the principal observers, something more, something finer about the unconscious motives of the actors. We are made to be deliciously 'in on' every episode.

Another thing to be particularly noted in Cervantes's style is the confident way in which he places his characters before us and makes them talk or perform some action, so that we really see them all the time and believe in them. There are no extraordinary flashes, no sudden revealing phrases, such as the baroque writers favoured, but a steady, even light. The speed, too, with which everything happens is just what it should be—an important thing in a novel, for it is this that keeps the attention stretched. In short, we have in *Don Quixote* a classic model of novelists' style as it existed down to the nineteenth century. How remarkable an achievement that was will be seen if one looks at any of the novels, *contes* or romances, in any language whatever, before him, and notes the baldness with which they are written.

The English novel owes a great deal to Cervantes. Fielding, Smollett, Scott and Dickens came out of him. For more than two hundred years he has been more read and admired in this country than any other foreign writer. Yet today his stock is low. The ordinary reader of robust appetite may continue to enjoy him, but the intellectual, after a first youthful perusal, leaves him on the shelf. Now there are, I think, a number of reasons for this. In the first place it must be admitted that, like all very well-written

books, *Don Quixote* loses much of its savour in translation, and also that even in Spanish some parts of it are tedious. Then we are put off by the slapstick, though why we should refuse to accept from Cervantes what we gladly put up with from Charlie Chaplin I do not know. However, there are some people who maintain that it is the author's evident enjoyment of the knight's drubbings that repels them. This seems to me to be based on too literal a reading: Don Quixote is a symbol before he is a man, and his defeats are the defeats of the principle for which he stands. In a book whose subject is right thinking, the author must necessarily take sides with—to use Freudian language—the Reality Principle against the ragings of the Super Ego. The significant thing about this novel—its claim to be twice over a tragedy—is that it not only shows us the defeat of the man of noble feelings by the second-rate and vulgar, but that it convinces us that that defeat was right.

But the chief reason for the neglect of *Don Quixote* today is, I think, that we allow the too simplified picture that the Victorians had of it, and which is confirmed by our first youthful reading, to stand between us and the original. This is a pity because it is really a book that has more to say to us than it had to them. Its subject is militant—which is as much as to say revolutionary—faith. It explains the psychology of the believing and half-believing man with a subtlety and penetration not approached by any other writer. If one wanted a modern equivalent, one could rename it the adventures of the party man and his fellow traveller. And where do its sympathies lie? The revolutionary is the hero of the book, yet its author has not only made him mad, but has cast doubts on the purity of his motives. Don Quixote may be inspired by a passion for justice, but he is also vain and egoistic and cut off by his obsession from an understanding of human life. The condemnation of his mission is expressed by his niece in the question: 'Would it not be better to stay peacefully at home than to go gadding about the world in search of *pan de trastrigo*?'—which Shelton translates 'better bread than is made from wheat'. Yet we never doubt that Cervantes was a man of good will: he is emotionally on his knight's side, though he pronounces judgement against him. With all his failings, Don Quixote towers above the other characters as the one great and noble man in the book.

Lastly, we may take this book on a metaphysical plane. Although

in doing this we are going far beyond the author's intentions, the material for such an interpretation is there and there is pleasure to be got from the queries it raises about human certainties. If we cannot pin down this most elusive of writers to any definite attitude, we may at least say that he contrasts the biological need which man has for faith with the difficulty his intellect has in finding grounds for one. Don Quixote dies when he loses his illusion—a commentary on Baudelaire's *Il faut être ivre*—whilst Sancho, who has no intellect, lives on and flourishes. We may sum up Cervantes's contribution to philosophy by saying that, like Montaigne and Descartes, he set in motion a chain reaction of doubt.

Perhaps we have now reached a point when we can pull all these strands together and say what the author of *Don Quixote* was really like and how his book grew out of him. By temperament a positive, sanguine man with a strong will to live and high ambitions, he was secretly riddled, as one might expect from his early life and parentage, with uncertainty and self-doubt. At Lepanto and still more at Algiers he silenced these doubts by the means that are open in wartime to every man of spirit—that is, by reckless displays of gallantry. But back in Spain this comparatively easy way was no longer feasible. The chasm between what he was and what he wanted to be began to grow wider. A failure in love, a failure in literature, a failure even in the very ordinary job he had taken on, sinking deeper every day into shabbiness and disreputability, and seeing round him a family even more disreputable than himself (his sisters had made their living out of rich men, just as his only daughter was soon to do), he yet found late in life the luck, the talent and the courage—for all were required—to face up to his predicament and express his tragic sense of it in a novel. And so we have *Don Quixote*, a book written, as a learned Oriental critic has said, with the pen of doubt upon the paper of conviction, a profoundly human book, crude and tedious perhaps at times, but shot through with lights of marvellous subtlety and delicacy, and with this special characteristic—that it generates in the mind of everyone who reads it as it should be read new thoughts and reflections. It has the ambiguity, the faculty for being endlessly interpreted of myths, so that one might almost say that the author wrote it in collaboration with posterity.

There is one last aspect I would like to touch on. The Russian novelists have accustomed us to expect that a great novel should portray in a broad way the life and character of the country where it was written. This is certainly done by *Don Quixote*. With the exception of the *Canterbury Tales*, there is no English book that conveys half as immediately or abundantly the flavour of England. Its scene of action lies for the most part on the roads and in the roadside inns or *ventas*. Along these roads there passed, generally on mules or asses, and invariably at foot-pace, everyone who had any reason for travel, and this was an invitation to Cervantes to bring almost every well-known type or profession into his picture. A few episodes occur in more solitary places, among that inextricable tangle of hills and valleys that is known as the Sierra Morena. But, wherever we are, we feel the Spanish landscape with its treeless plains or poplar-fringed streams or valleys dotted with ilex trees—*toda la espaciosa y triste España*, as Luis de Leon called it—looking, as it were, over our shoulder. Though never described to us, it is always present.

There are then the two chief actors. I need not say that Sancho, with his strings of proverbs and his ready wit and his shrewdness and his obstinacy, is a national product. Starting off as the type of stage *gracioso*, he develops as the book goes on into the most complete and detailed portrait of a peasant or working man ever painted. (His appearances in the Second Part and those of his wife Teresa are especially delicious.) The knight, too, with his gravity and courtesy, and a certain plainness and bareness of mind that tell us that he also has been conditioned by the scenery, is made in the Spanish mould. And where else but in Spain could the friendship that unites master and man be found? In England or France, it would, then or at any other time, have been unthinkable. It says worlds for the temper of Spanish society that such mutual loyalty and affection should have been able to transcend the barriers of rank and fortune. This was possible because the innate sense of dignity and self-esteem that are peculiar to Spaniards and to some of the Balkan peoples prevent them from thinking that any profession, however humble, can demean them.

But here we must stop. The Spaniards of today, moved by the insatiable passion for understanding and explaining themselves that has come over them since the turn of the century, have found in *Don Quixote* with his delusions and his wisdom, his violence

and his courtesy, his egoism and his moral fervour the type and symbol of the Spanish character and have built upon his story a philosophy of the tragic attitude to life. But this is only one more interpretation of an endlessly interpretable book, and it would be beyond the scope of this study to discuss it.

ANDRÉ MALRAUX

THE PSYCHOLOGY
OF ART¹

THE galleries of our imaginary Art Collections² which were witnessing the spectacular collapse of 'programme' art and rational canons of beauty became overnight, as it were, a spawning ground for fetishes. The fetishes did not, as we were promised in 1920 or so, oust the Victory of Samothrace: they merely took their own place in the Collection. What place was that?

We can ignore interpretations, valuable as they sometimes are, which have been based on inadequate knowledge of the artists and their circumstances. For instance, there are African statues which strike us as perfect symbols of liberty. Yet if the truth were known the sculptor could not have altered the curve of a nostril without having his execution ordered by the witch-doctor.

Although it is difficult to consider a primitive work of art apart from its primitive quality, and although the most abstract piece of Negro sculpture remains in a different category from a Lipchitz, primitive types of art appealed to our artists in the first instance as systems of forms. When Cézanne in his old age, in a phrase which covered almost the whole field of modern art, announced that the thing was 'to do Poussin from life itself', some of the younger painters inferred that if they wanted to go beyond

¹ The present extract has been taken from *Le Musée Imaginaire*, which was recently published by Albert Skira and forms the first volume of a larger work, *Psychologie de l'Art*.

² The imaginary Art Collection contains the whole corpus of the world's art: all of it in a sense accessible to the modern student, thanks to photography and other methods of reproduction.

Cézanne's best water-colours, they would derive more inspiration from a fetish than from the 'Enlèvement des Sabines'. Negro art, they felt, was in much the same position as classical art at the time of the Renaissance: it was a privileged medium of expression.

It burst on our culture as a 'tectonic' art; but also—and this applies still more to pre-Columbian and Oceanian art—as an art of expression without gesture: anti-baroque. No barbaric art gesticulates. The art of the Steppes, which expresses tremendous movement, flatly ignores the objective form of its animals.

Tibetan art, which combines movement with the objective representation of the bodies of imaginary beings, and possesses an element of fantasy that is far from primitive, belongs to the realm of what the English call curios rather than to art proper. Our revivals have been selective. If we have explored all the arts in the world, they have not all made an impression on us. For them to do so it seems at first sight sufficient qualification that they should not be what the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries would have called civilized.

The Far East and Persia have known long periods of a refinement which corresponds with our notions of humanistic refinement. Diderot's screen Chinaman and Montesquieu's Persian are remote enough from the real Chinaman and the real Persian; but it was no accident that the eighteenth century recognized an affinity with them which it denied to India and, indeed, to Islam. Nevertheless, Chinese art has not influenced our own. And even the craze for Japanese prints and Japanese decoration was short-lived. Japanese art of the best period had only to become known to eclipse the refined period. No artist would think of pitting Hokusai, or for that matter Sesson, against the Nara frescoes. The influence of the Safawid miniatures (though the figures are certainly motionless) was purely ephemeral, and the centuries of Chinese refinement are the private domain of specialists. Even the great Chinese painting, if we except the frescoes (which our eighteenth-century taste would have rejected), only touches the fringe of our artistic life: the great hieratic sculpture of Buddhism is infinitely better known than Sung painting. And apparently this sculpture makes a much deeper appeal to us when its Buddhist purity preserves strong traces of primitive feeling.

Refinement cannot be the only criterion. For we have appropriated the art of Byzantium; though it is true that we find the

austerity of Romanesque frescoes more to our taste than Byzantine gold. And Byzantium, overwhelmed by the idea of God, practically ignores man. So that it is perhaps more accurate to say that if an art is to return to favour it must not emphasize the fact that it is civilized, for the first essential is that it should exclude humanism.

The struggle between modern art and the accepted standards of the nineteenth century showed that there was an unconscious challenging of humanistic values. Undoubtedly some strange ideas about Greece were current in 1850. Renan, Taine, and for that matter Anatole France, saw their imaginary Greece primarily as the deliverer from medieval Christianity. But in regarding the Renaissance as a struggle they were perfectly right. It was a struggle which had arisen much earlier when Greece clashed with the East, and confronted the gods of her rival with an idealized man, the equal of destiny. Beside the highest art forms of Egypt or Chaldaea these Greek figures may seem insignificant, but it is only just to recognize how well they express a free humanity. All of them, from Tanagra statuettes to decorated plinths, from dolls to the sculptures at Olympia, are performing a secret dance before the sacred immobility of the East. The challenging of classical forms by the revival of those of Egypt and the Euphrates also meant the revival of man in the attitude of prayer. The same was true of the recourse to Romanesque forms. All his life Anatole France loathed primitive art, and modern art.

This anti-humanism, which the struggle against the 'programme' tradition only partially explains, did not merely restore their original meaning to works of art and establish the supremacy of the individual artist in painting. After primitive art we discovered the 'regressive' types of art. In our quest for styles which were more and more aboriginal, and for more and more aboriginal examples of each style, we climbed back eagerly through time: right back to instinct. And on the farther side of history we discovered two new varieties: the art of children and the art of lunatics.

The child, however, though his performance is often that of an artist, cannot properly be defined as an artist. For he is controlled by his talent, instead of being able to control it. The effects he achieves in a single sketch he will be incapable of maintaining in a series, and he is only a painter in the same sense that a man who is having a dream is a poet. His approach is entirely different from

the artist's, because the latter is determined to profit from all his experience. This is something the child never thinks of; miracle is his substitute for mastery.

Miracles are easier because his pictures are conceived without reference to a spectator. The child paints to please himself and makes no attempt to command attention. Thus he is outside our present subject, though the opposite is true of our taste for his drawings and paintings. But, just as it is customary to use the word Gothic not merely of the style common to Gothic works of art, but of the sum total of these works, vaguely personified, similarly children's art comes to be regarded as a style: one which differs from that of the Gothic or the Sumerian super-artist, because it cannot evolve, but is characteristic of an instinctive artist—Childhood.

Along with children's art, we have become conscious of 'naïve' and 'popular' art. They are not identical. 'Popular' art has its own traditions, and is often the language of a particular artist to a particular public. Georgin would have had no difficulty in engraving classical battle-scenes. 'Naïve' art is not simply another description of 'popular' art: the painting and even the photography of the fair-ground link up with the shop-window dummies of the late nineteenth century. 'Popular' art springs from the peasants and never loses its Gothic flavour. 'Naïve' art comes from the *petits bourgeois* of the cities. It is conventionalized but painstaking, and symbolized by the wax moustache.

Lunatic art, like that of children (but unlike 'naïve' art, which, if its perspective is faulty, is not always in the flat) is two-dimensional. It is more expressive than any other kind of art because of the anguish behind it, and more turbid, with its mingling of draughtsmanship and pent-up violence. Its destruction of the accepted relationship between men and objects, its creation of a new world, would be intensely exciting but for the paralysis which afflicts all mad work. Lunatic art worries us—and sometimes fascinates us—like lunatics themselves: but in quite a different way from the witches in *Macbeth*.

An important feature of these types of art—indeed, of all art except our own traditional art from Masaccio to Manet—is that no attempt is made to create an illusion. 'Naïve' art itself may lead to the dummy, but not to the wax busts in the hairdresser's window. Resemblance is by no means avoided, but the 'naïve'

artist relies on suggestion rather than illusion. In fact, these special kinds of art are a species of hieroglyphic, and though at times they achieve realistic expression they are primarily concerned with symbolical utterance.

'Naïve' and 'popular' artists, children, lunatics, savages, and not a few of our primitives, draw what they know rather than what they see. The savage knows that the idol is as he carves it; the child knows that his house has people inside and draws them on top; Henri Rousseau knows that he does not see every leaf on a tree, but he knows that the tree has leaves and proceeds to paint them in one by one. All the same it is a kind of knowledge totally unlike that of the modern world. Where modern man enjoys his mastery over things, the 'naïve' artist stresses his state of dependence. It is a knowledge belonging to another age: often the product of a different civilization from our own, and invariably of a different mental outlook.

All such art contains a latent criticism of the civilization which has produced, or revived, it. This is the link between the 'naïve' and the early medieval artist, between the lunatic (sometimes the child, too) and the primitive of the Euphrates; and this is what makes all this kind of art at the present time a weapon against humanism. The artist who considers the lessons of primitivism supremely important has obviously some motive besides the desire to experiment with forms. A hankering after the primitive implies, among other things, a bond of union with an element which is missing from current civilization. Manet's only object was to force his opponents to listen to Velazquez and to revive the art of painting, but in the event he revived the Hals of the *Regentessen* and Goya. Rembrandt at long last came into his own. The work of Delacroix invaded the sphere of the drama so successfully that people recognized that some of Rubens's work had anticipated him. They began to appreciate that Tintoretto and the Titian of the *Pietà* were not peas in a pod with Paolo Veronese. All the voices in art which had ever arraigned man suddenly recovered their vibrancy. In spite of the taboos, after the death of Ingres, the world of man reconciled to God, the world of Raphael, became an alien world. And the school of Bologna is no longer one school among so many others, but a fraud. The fetish and the surrealist exhibit are not meant to be ornaments: they are accusations.

If Impressionism was not a criticism of the culture it sprang from, Gauguin and Van Gogh certainly were. And they were not alone. At the beginning of the century it was the most 'modern' painters, the painters pre-occupied with the future, who most furiously ransacked the past. Artists like Cézanne, who applied to landscape the planes of Gothic sculpture, and Gauguin, who produced his own version of Polynesian art, or Derain and Picasso, who brought back Negro art and Sumerian idols, combed every world except the world to which they were bound. They knew that the concept of man in harmony with himself had become utterly false: the styles they copied and the work they did both seemed to point to the Achilles heel of the tyrant, civilization.

'If the ransom of the world demands the torture of a single innocent child by a brute, I throw in my hand,' said Dostoevsky through the mouth of Ivan Karamazov. After his return from prison he never ceased to taunt civilization with the torture of innocent children, the unsimple problem of the consumptive in *The Idiot*, which Tolstoi was also to handle in *Ivan Ilyitch*. The indictment of social conditions led, politically, to the destruction of the system on which they were based; and the indictment of human nature by artists has resulted in the destruction of art forms which take it for granted. No culture has been able to prevent man from dying, but the great cultures have sometimes managed to transform the aspect of death, and have always disguised it. Tragic art has used the revival of barbaric styles to attack civilization, especially for its fraudulent attempt to muzzle destiny.

The sweeping change of values was not just a criticism of painting, but of man. The galleries of painted idols, the Polynesian tympanum at Autun, and even the Chartres doorway, are really attacking Western optimism. The black figures of the *Regentessen*, which have eclipsed for us the earlier, gaily coloured Archers and Topers, are the dirge of the aged Hals, driven in on his own agony like Ivan Ilyitch. At about the same time in history, Rembrandt, the proud, humble old man who fell in love with servant girls, painted 'The Sweeper' and transfigured his subject. There is no doubt that a new hope for the world soon drowned the first tragic voices. But the hope with which Victor Hugo and Walt Whitman, Renan and Berthelot had invested progress, science and democracy, and which replaced man's acceptance of his lot in an ordered world, soon lost its ringing confidence. A

good many nineteenth-century artists, who appeal to us through a breach in our defences—Baudelaire, Delacroix, Balzac, Vigny, Flaubert—are men of limbo. They no longer seriously believe in traditional man, and they do not believe in progress. Western civilization has secretly begun to doubt its own credentials. History—history which has obsessed European thought much as the Buddha's questioning ravaged Asia—has been born: no longer is it a mere chronicling of events, but the uneasy cross-examination of the past to discover what fate has in store.

When the idea of progress disappears, history is liable to be interpreted as destiny. The present century, compared with the nineteenth, seems like the Renaissance of Fatalism. For the nineteenth century, civilization meant first of all peace, and then liberty. In the interval between Rousseau and Freud, human liberty can hardly be said to have increased. All forms are useful when art is groping for the truth and must expose the lies which are being bruited in the name of art. Negro sculpture, emerging from the twilight, has surely revived the prophetic function of art. What nineteenth-century country would have dared to indulge in *organized* torture? Crouched like the Fates in their blazing art galleries, the fetishes gaze out on the ruined cities of the West—a West converted to brotherly love—and see the last wisps of smoke mingle with the smoke from the death-ovens.



These revivals, however, concern only the few hundred thousand people for whom art is a language. Photographs of fetishes have not yet invaded the factory or the farm—or even the drawing-room; and the one form of art to reach the masses has been the latest incarnation of 'programme' art which has been most influential in the two countries to uphold the tradition of Western optimism, the United States and Soviet Russia: that is to say, the cinema. The passion for primitivism went very deep with certain artists, but it did not eliminate the natural desire to extend their range. And after the post-Manet revivals there followed a new renaissance, and a rearrangement of our imaginary art collection which practically ignored the barbaric renaissance.

Demons, especially the great demons of Babylon, the Catacombs and Autun, performed one major service to nineteenth-century artists: they helped them to repudiate the artistic values

approved by the culture of their time. This was the culture of the bourgeoisie: not the kind of bourgeois who won the affection of Daumier and Flaubert, but the *de facto* aristocracy which became prominent under the Second Empire. This type of bourgeois felt no hostility towards the working man or the real aristocrat, but solely towards the artist. Backed up by his social position and by a culture which was often more extensive than the painter's (ranging, as it did, from Homer to Offenbach), he was the champion of 'programme' art, one of the pillars of the official collection—the Comte de Nieuwerkerke, Keeper of the Louvre, was a typical example. Like the aristocrat of the past, he wanted an art which would do his bidding, painting which would equally impress those who cared for painting and those who wanted something to look at. But painting, so long faithful to the Church and to the whim of princes, did not mean to be under the thumb of the bourgeoisie.

There are various styles belonging to the bourgeois epoch, but no specific bourgeois style. The great Christian styles had been at the service of God, Christ and the Church, and those which succeeded them at the service of the aristocracy. To say that Gothic sanctified the saint is almost a truism. While art was primarily religious, portraiture was unassuming. Fouquet's 'Charles VII' has less dignity than his 'Juvénal des Ursins'. Even Holbein's 'Henry VIII' is not very impressive. The painter is on the side of the Church and portraits have the humility of the confessional. But with the change over from faith to religion portraits lost this look. The so-called classical style idealized its subjects: the effigies of those bourgeois noblemen, the Medici, begin with the protruding lip of Cosmo the Elder, but end with the majestic *Pensieroso*. Plastic idealizing, à la Plutarch, invented the mythology of the Great at a period when their outlines had grown hazy. The bourgeoisie hoped that Ingres would do as much for them as Raphael had done for the Roman aristocracy; but the portrait of Monsieur Bertin will not bear comparison with that of Baldassare Castiglione; and, though the painting of Ingres owes nothing to the eighteenth century, his intellectual values are those of Voltaire's tragedies. Like Sainte-Beuve¹, Ingres thought in

¹ This is why Sainte-Beuve, so sound when he is criticizing people whose values coincided with his own, can be so mistaken about people whose values were different.

terms of a vanished society, the perfect painter of a France which had gone through no Revolution and in which the development of the bourgeoisie had been the same as in England. Like Balzac, he recast the social upheaval of the Restoration world, putting back the clock which Daumier put forward. The bourgeoisie, unlike any previous ruling class, had no portrait painters but it did not have to wait for caricaturists.

Men's imaginations refused to be stirred. The bourgeoisie had an imposing tradition which went back to its heyday in Flanders at the time of the confessional portrait. But its desire to become an aristocracy, without surrendering bourgeois values (a mistake the Florentine bourgeoisie had been careful to avoid), provoked the clash with the artist which first involved Hals and Rembrandt. And in nineteenth-century France the bourgeoisie had much more reason to reproach itself than in seventeenth-century Holland. By simultaneously rejecting the pageantry of the monarchy and the epos of the Revolution—Le Nôtre and Michelet—it cut itself off from the imagination. Disturbed by two revolutions which had given it power in the name of the people, threatened in its turn by the people and by the recrudescence of grand Napoleonic memories (with which, for a very brief period under the Second Empire, it seemed to be identified), the bourgeoisie was consistently the enemy of the imagination; because the imagination led to civil war, to war generally. If the age-old ideal of riches, serenity and honour is typical of the bourgeois, so is what he considers his realism and the scorn he pours on Utopias. The whole of the nineteenth century, like the Victor Hugo of *Quatre-Vingt-Treize*, was to have its revolutionary myths, and its reactionary, indeed its Christian, myths as well: but never a bourgeois myth.

Romantic imagination had maintained its hold on men throughout the eighteenth century. 'The world has been empty since the Romans,' declared Saint-Just to the National Assembly. This obsession with ancient Rome made the Revolution the incarnation of a stage piece; but there were no further incarnations of the romantic past because it furnished no parallels with contemporary history, apart from the apocalyptic war years, and because the necessary stimulus of unreality was lacking. (Michelet, recording the impressions of his own family, refers to the 'immense boredom of the Empire' at its zenith: time had to pass

before the legendary Napoleon could come into focus.¹) The revolt of the individual now took the place of the Revolution: Hernani succeeding Cromwell. Art, having refused the bourgeoisie admission into its private world, let in the bourgeoisie's enemies. The myths woven round Byron, the aristocrat who had rebelled against the aristocracy of his native land, fortified the bourgeois artists of the Continent who had rebelled against their bourgeoisie. And the more the latter, instead of creating a style of its own, indulged its appetite, slithering from its adoption of Racine to its love of Augier, from its enthusiasm for Ingres to a passion for Meissonier, the deeper went the revolt of the artist, from Hugo to Rimbaud, and from Delacroix to Van Gogh. After Ingres there was no great bourgeois portraiture, but there were various fine portraits of the bourgeois epoch, like the 'Chopin' of Delacroix and Courbet's 'Baudelaire'. They were the portraits of artists.²

For artists were becoming a class apart. In the seventeenth century the arts had shared the same aesthetic principles, but painters, poets and musicians had had few dealings with one another. Since the end of the eighteenth century, though the arts have gone different ways, artists have known one another and ceased to know people in outside circles. Art changed its character, and instead of remaining an ornament of civilization became what the term now implies. It was not because he was a writer that Diderot had been in touch with painters, but because he was a philosopher. Poetry in the eighteenth century was on a very different plane from painting: it was simply a sign of intellectual refinement. What specific problem of Delille's or Dorat's in poetry could have borne any relation to a painting problem of Fragonard's? But, from the romantic period onwards, painters, poets and musicians have drawn up a private world with values quite distinct from those of the outside world. Their multifarious experiments all have the same stamp of exclusiveness. In their

¹ The age of historical incarnations was over. The inspiration which the Revolution had drawn from Rome was lost sight of for the next eighty years, and neither 1848 nor the Commune could recapture the spirit of the Convention. The Russian Revolution was to follow a totally different pattern.

² Later on, however, the landscape painter, Corot, thought of the idea of treating the face like a landscape, and the portrait became for the painter merely one species of personal utterance among others. (If Greece discovered the smile, modern art has abolished expression in the eyes.) Wagner was to reproach Renoir for turning him into a *petit bourgeois* from the provinces.

closed society art was the whole purpose of life, and its essential function was to denounce the world.

The two most noticeable things about the artist of this period are his break with the past and his slow, lonely process of self-justification. However, it was customary for him to take his scalps home to the tribe of heterogeneous fellow-artists, and this not only increased his isolation from society, but attached him more firmly to his special group. Our great solitaires, from Baudelaire to Rimbaud, are men who haunted the literary cafés. The cantankerous Gauguin used to attend Mallarmé's Tuesdays—Mallarmé whose close friendship with Manet reminds one of Baudelaire's friendship with Delacroix. And it was not theorizing critics, but poets—Baudelaire and Mallarmé, in fact—who were the great connoisseurs of contemporary painting.

Humanistic art flattered the civilization to which it belonged. The appearance of non-humanistic art, by helping to make art a province of its own, drew artists closer and closer together, as it isolated them from the ordinary culture (and society) of their period. Inside their closed circle, which had no historical precedent even in Florence, art was regarded as a sphere in which life was merely the raw material. Man's only importance in this sphere was to be able to impart a world created by himself. It was the birth not so much of a religion as of a passionate sect, far more eager to transmit its values to its adherents than to popularize them; conferring alike on its saints and on its freaks a sort of Pre-election; more pleased—like all sects—than it would admit with its esotericism; and capable of sacrifice for a dim and despotic Truth. Cézanne's painting is Cézanne's truth, the painting of Van Gogh the truth of Van Gogh.

Their truth started from a vivid awareness of falsity. If Manet and Cézanne were sometimes diffident about their own genius, they were always quite sure that Côté and Meissonier were second-rate. Truth also meant the desire to strip painting of everything which did not belong to it; to extract it from its embedding crust; to accept suggestions only from itself. It included the right of the individual artist to express himself as he chose, without paying homage to the rational concepts of his age; his right to set out on an adventure, the success or failure of which could only be gauged by posterity. And posterity, for the masters of this period, still meant artists. Cézanne was not

waiting for the day when there would be calendar reproductions of his work in every home, but for his pictures to hang in the Louvre. One of the sharpest clashes between modern and bourgeois art was over the question of tradition. The moderns considered their opponents impostors, above all for pretending to be the legitimate heirs of the great masters. After Delacroix, Manet, encouraged by the new revivals which were threatening traditional art, was the first to emulate the greatest masters; not by copying them, but by setting out, as they had, on an essentially lonely quest. He was even more convinced than Delacroix that the tourist is not a species of pioneer, and that an artist does not resemble those he admires by imitating their works. In the case of the great moderns, the appeal to posterity was coupled with a feverish attachment to the men they regarded as their masters. Their formula for Truth might perhaps be expressed by these words: 'Our aim is to do true painting.' For all true painting, they believed, contained its own recommendation to posterity.

It was a sect which knew all about asceticism. For this truth of theirs, painters would accept misery as a matter of course. From Baudelaire to Verlaine, from Daumier to Modigliani, is one long story of human sacrifice. But if these artists felt that they themselves were damned they never dreamed that their truth could be. The loneliness they fled from in the present, they could escape far more easily in the past, for there they had discovered their prophets.

Man's attempt to reach his loftiest aim, culture, depends largely on a knowledge of the works of the past which can serve his purpose: a knowledge which would follow the cycle of his inner development. Medieval culture did not consist in a knowledge of the *Roman d'Alexandre*, or even of the works of Aristotle which then represented a whole technique of thought; but in a knowledge of the sacred writings, of the thought of the Fathers and the Saints. It was a culture of the soul, and art had no place in it, for art belonged entirely to every-day life. The painter painted portraits or tables and chairs indiscriminately, and the great Flemish painters drew set pieces for the Dukes of Burgundy. The Renaissance, however, knew the artist's worth, and was no longer circumscribed by the present. What it expected from the past was a setting. (And, every time it became the slave of this setting, its art suffered. Perhaps the long eclipse of French poetry

was due to the fact that Ronsard elected to use a Theocritean background instead of the fairy paraphernalia used by Spenser.) It also expected the past to answer the questions which Christian writers had ignored or repudiated. The whole of Montaigne is a dialogue incorporating these answers. The real object behind the happy, hectic excavation of the past was apparently to unearth evidence which would diminish the importance of the Devil (and perhaps of God at the same time); and the climax of the Renaissance can be seen in the aristocratic splendour of Titian and the visits of emperor and kings to this inspired firewood-seller—with every window opening on to a riot of nudities and veils. The senses became the supreme authority of the artist, who rendered them into his own terms; the voluptuous nude was now an expression of the sublime. Eighteenth-century culture was concerned neither with the soul nor with the senses, but with the intelligence. Several of its greatest painters seem to belong elsewhere. What had Rembrandt in common with Racine and the values for which Racine stood? The study of the past led to an ordering of man and the world: culture could be learned entirely from the humanities. During the eighteenth century, scientific knowledge entered into general culture. This no longer meant all the means that were available for getting back to the past, but all those available for reaching out by way of the past to the future.

The treasury of the past remained an obsession with the nineteenth-century artist, but his appeal was to individual figures. Dante, Shakespeare, Cervantes, Beethoven; Michelangelo, Titian of the final period, Rembrandt, Goya: provided him with standards as exacting as those of classicism and reason, but the result was different. His object was not to take refuge from bourgeois culture by rediscovering a picturesque medieval world, but to contradict outright the new scale of values which was emerging. Art, confronted with a culture which threatened to degrade if not to extinguish it, for the first time in history attacked culture by choosing and canonizing its own heroes.

The great artists who transformed the West, and for whom painting was an approach to a cosmic or superhuman world, instead of the hallowed world to which earlier artists had aspired, have far less influence today than they deserve, because the worst painters have insisted, preposterously, on claiming descent from them. (The theatrical is the sublime caricatured.) They carry less

weight with modern art than El Greco, Chardin or Piero; but their spiritual value is high. For our civilization, that is to say, not for our romanticism. Why is it that Michelangelo at Florence and Rembrandt at The Hague make us think of Beethoven rather than Bach? It is because their domain seems today a lost kingdom: a kingdom containing all that in every art is beyond the terms of that art. There is in the David of Chartres, or the Roncalli *Pietà*, a something else which is not in Maillol, in Bach a something which is not in Ravel, in Shakespeare a something not in Mallarmé. It is a quality which is not subject to the culture it springs from: Racine crowns his culture like the pediment of a Greek temple, but Rembrandt suggests the glow of a blazing building. The moments at which the Western genius seems to achieve a transcendence, not so much semi-religious as semi-sacred in character, are moments when it is thoroughly detached from the subject and style of the period. There was a baroque Michelangelo, but the Roncalli *Pietà* is more like a Bourdelle in the manner of Michelangelo than any sixteenth-century sculpture or any Italian sculptor; and there was a baroque Rembrandt, but 'The Three Crosses', the 'Supper at Emmaus' and the 'Homer' belong neither to Holland nor to the eighteenth century. Nobody has yet been able to date the Villeneuve *Pietà*. Undoubtedly, all great art gives us the feeling of a secret victory over the cosmos, but we have seen a sculpture in the West that gives us the impression of having met Destiny in single combat, of having greeted the millenary drift of nebulae with Prospero's speech: 'We are such stuff as dreams are made on.' 'The greatest mystery is not that we have been cast at random between the profusion of matter and the multiplicity of stars, but that in the prison house we are able to spin such potent images in denial of our nothingness.'

The nineteenth century, however, which revived the work of this bunch of supreme artists, only thought of it as one means of expression among others. In the valley of the dead, where Rembrandt and Michelangelo, Shakespeare and Beethoven were brought together, were also assembled all the sages, heroes and saints in history. They were the witnesses of the divine faculty in man, the accoucheurs who were to deliver the new Man. All the great myths of this century, Liberty, Democracy, Science, Progress, met in the greatest hope humanity has known since the

¹ Or the portraits at Aix and Bayonne.

Catacombs. When the tides of time have washed away, on the ocean-bed of kindly oblivion, the dross, that eager looking forward will be seen for what it was: a supreme longing to clothe man with his proper grandeur. But although the subterranean echo of those voices can be heard beneath all the best work of our time, although no man of culture would deny his debt to them, and though the West is inconceivable without them, Rembrandt and Michelangelo belong to our 'programme' heritage rather than to our heritage of forms; they link up with Shakespeare as much as with their rival artists, just as the transcendent quality of the Monreale mosaics or the Kings at Chartres links up with Dante no less than Vézelay.

¹But art had been uprooted from any historical setting and freed from the sovereignty of a Golden Age, that is to say, of a particular culture. The great fissure which had been opened by Rembrandt and Michelangelo swallowed up the whole of the past. It was a human attitude, rather than a vanished and legendary age, which had been isolated from history, and in the same way Manet and early modern art isolated an artistic attitude.

But to replace acknowledged works by special utterances, Raphael by Goya, and—by paying honour to pure painting—to magnify the prestige of the individual artist was only a beginning. The great styles, whose revival threatened academic art from 1850 onwards, contained something besides individual expression, however remarkable that was. If Manet vied with the masters who had been freed from the academic tradition, Cézanne emulated the styles which had set them free.

In trying to re-interpret Poussin he went far beyond him. Poussin pointed forward to nothing; Cézanne with his synthesis of Gothic planes and Doric style foreshadowed twentieth-century architecture. What other style matches the skyscraper? In Cézanne painting and sculpture met after a long enough separation. Neither Géricault, Delacroix nor Courbet had expressed themselves through sculpture; Daumier's 'Ratapoil' is more the work of a great draughtsman than of a great painter. The taste for landscape was to separate their successors still further from sculpture. (Cézanne, if he invented a style which combined painting, architecture and sculpture, was not a sculptor.) Above all, the tremendous revival, which began with the triumph of Manet, did not affect sculpture. The authority, and the freedom,

of the painters who drew with their brush, are to be found in some of Rodin's work and in all the sculptures of Degas, but nowhere in the past. And, if modern art was looking for its sources among the masters who had refused to be enslaved by exact representation, was it more likely to find the independence of Hals or Goya in Carpeaux or in the Romanesque sculptors? The indirect action of the great styles of sculpture had produced the most pure painting in history; but the plastic revival for which pure painting was responsible was of these self-same styles. The counterpart of the painter who wanted painting to be a system of colours and forms, and only secondarily a means of conveying images, was not so much Rodin who left thumb-marks¹ on all his work, as the sculptor for whom plastic art was essentially a system of volumes.

Cézanne expanded El Greco and Masaccio to their full dimensions; if he had never lived, we could never have properly appreciated Georges de Latour. Between his 'Nature Morte à la Pendule', which was only intended to be painting, and his last canvases, which are first and foremost style, lies the whole distinction between Bach and Negro music, between Piero della Francesca and barbaric art—between mastery and miracle.

Europe had known styles of two kinds. Those of the one kind had been the supreme expression of their time: the cathedral is inseparable from the Gothic barn and house and parish. The other styles, spontaneously or laboriously reproducing the past, sprang from the subjection of an epoch or a school to a revival which provided models to be copied. A given style in either category belongs to one single moment in history. The new style no more possesses the organic character of medieval styles than the elegant superficiality of the traditional Renaissance. And it would not be true to say that it provides a model. It may be that it is the most intellectual style that the history of art has ever known. For it is detached from history, and at the end of a period when determinism has persistently persecuted art, it has united Piero della Francesca and El Greco with Doric and Tang statues. Other epochs in which the art of the past was appropriated—Alexandria, several centuries in China, and our sixteenth, seventeenth and

¹ It may be that the obvious traces of the tool in Gothic wood-carving remind one of brush marks in a painting and are partly responsible for the vogue for this kind of work.

nineteenth centuries—have witnessed the same tremendous effort to annex that part of the past which seemed useful or congenial. But it was always a question of resuscitating a vanished world. Michelangelo made a mistake in thinking that he could imitate the classical, not in admiring in classical art a certain presentation of man. The idea was to revive an aesthetic; bad classical was better than good Gothic—in fact, there was no good Gothic. If we, too, in our turn are inspiring disciples, at any rate the works we consider important are those that are connected with discoveries of style. When our revivals attack our culture, it is not in favour of any earlier culture.

The style which harmonized the ancient Greeks, the Buddhas of the Wei dynasty and the Royal Door at Chartres, the Roncalli *Pietà* and Georges de Latour, naked pre-Columbian images and Piero della Francesca, surely expresses a permanent instinct in Western art—the instinct which in Michelangelo's work produced both the Roncalli *Pietà* and the 'Judgment', and issued in such contrasts as Piero and the Florentine goldsmiths, El Greco and Tintoretto, Ingres and Delacroix; until the coming of Cézanne. There was something in Piero besides great composition; El Greco was not an eccentric species of Poussin; and it was in imposing a monumental style on landscape that Cézanne disclosed the classicism of our epoch. This classicism, which goes back to the Renaissance, and is wide enough to include Negro art, might be defined as the style of certain masters who wished their work to reproduce the same quality that had been present in earlier work because of its subordination to architecture. The caste of artists, as it had discovered and decreed a specific painting, discovered and decreed a specific style.

Traditional classicism had found its models in Rome; its ideology came from France and was thence imposed on the rest of Europe. The symbol of our own classicism is Poussin, who lived at Rome and belonged to Rome: a fine painter whom our national pride likes to compare with Rembrandt, Velazquez or Piero della Francesca, in the same impartial spirit in which the Germans might nominate Dürer. Behind the classical idea in France was that of a beauty conceived in terms of the poetic imagination, of a world translated into harmony (as the Byzantine world had been into solemnity). Neither Euripides nor Raphael elected to be classical. (Michelangelo far less than Racine and

Poussin; and Racine influenced Europe less through his own tragedies than through those of Voltaire.) The claim to be classical soon becomes a way of justifying sterility: there are only classical instants—instants at the top of the curve of a movement which, by the nature of things, cannot be sustained. To suppose that classicism can be anything except a moment of the past, that it could escape its astral orbit and become a permanent model, is to believe in fixed stars. The classicism of our age, far more architectural than ornamental, specific and esoteric rather than cultured, is in no sense a system, but the domain of works which impress us as being dominated by their authors.

One might think that a work of art would give or withhold this suggestion of mastery simply by being looked at; and this would be true if, as in the seventeenth century, the beholder were comparing it with the spectacle represented or suggested. But we are no longer interested in what a work of art represents (whatever century it belongs to); we are only concerned with its relationship to other works of art. A great style is not the privilege of any one culture. We need not discuss artists like Chardin and Masaccio, whose prestige has simply increased. But the beginning of the century saw four painters, previously regarded as minor figures, raised to the highest rank: Piero della Francesca, El Greco, Georges de Latour and Vermeer. As in the case of Goya, and Delacroix, it is their presence in the canvas which reveals their genius; but it is a presence of style. It is not a matter of that brilliant freedom of the brush which made people say that Hals had a broad way of painting. Poussin looks ornamental beside Latour's 'Saint-Sébastien', Botticelli beside Piero, Ribera beside El Greco, all the lesser Dutch anecdotists beside the 'Head of a Young Girl'. These four painters possess the same quiet, irresistible simplicity which gave Cézanne his authority and was responsible for the revival of Bach, and it is this which links their work in one common style with the pediment at Olympia, the rock pictures of China, and Romanesque statues. This style, manifested and acclaimed simultaneously with the barbaric renaissance, is perhaps the greatest style of the West.



Our imaginary Art Collection was being formed at the end of the struggle between official and experimental art—the two

types of art which claimed kinship respectively with the past and with the future. Everywhere (except in Soviet Russia) the 'accursed' art has been victorious. Official doctrine has become meaningless, and the *prix de Rome* an obsolete survival. This triumph, which is the triumph of the individual artist, has begun, incidentally, to seem somewhat brittle. But we have seen that the struggle it ended was more than a question of aesthetics, and that the subordination of painting to culture was at issue. With the help of the imaginary Art Collection, which it also helped to revivify, modern art laid down the autonomy of painting. For a tradition, or culture, which meant whatever it said to be intelligible, it unconsciously helped to substitute a culture which was unintelligible. It was a culture in which experiment was more important than orderly statement; and in which the artist—perhaps also in his capacity as a human being—did not know whence he was setting out, what methods he should use, what he wanted to achieve, or where he was going. Artists were a company of Great Navigators.

Could such art be intelligible? The Renaissance, which was haunted by a mythical past, knew that past only in flashes. This present age, which looks for a past in its own image rather than a compulsory pattern, a past which is credible rather than dignified, has stated its values without really grasping them: our gods wait in the darkness for their resurrection. But the autonomy won by art freed it from the yoke of history. There were great epochs, yes; but no Golden Age. (What period has ever been so emphatic as ours in claiming equality with the greatest masters?) The specific style imposed by artists, in the process of detaching art from a set culture, has unburied a three thousand years' accumulation of forms scattered over half the globe. And what we are just beginning to realize is that the majority of the works which have been revived are not representations, and that plastic art does not depend exclusively on representation any more than on beauty.

The contrast between the two Greek styles, Hellenic and Byzantine, is extremely illuminating. One has only to look at mosaics or ikons, or to observe the development of art between the bust of Caesar (or even the worst examples of Roman sculpture) and the figures of the Eastern Roman Empire, to see that the whole object of Byzantium was to abstract the human face

from reality so as to identify it with a sacred cosmos. Whether a Byzantine painter could or could not have rivalled Pheidias in draughtsmanship hardly matters. Apart from aesthetic considerations it would have seemed to him as pointless as painting scenic illusions or modelling hairdressers' busts seems to us. Art had one supreme function: to work out a system of line which would detach men from their humanity and make them participate in a sacred mode of existence.

And what the Byzantine style makes obvious to us, because we belong to the same religious tradition, is latent in all religious art. Behind Byzantium lies the whole of the ancient East. All the great styles of the past are religious: primarily serving to portray the gods, they are pervaded by the figures of the gods, and the carved Egyptian spoon is linked up with Osiris. All our revivals, then, from Sumerian to Negro, are religious.¹ And the two traditions responsible for the aesthetic standard which is opposed to our own—the Greek and the Roman, that is, the classical—are the only two which strike us as profane. Since the style of religious art is not a way of seeing things but a method of consecrating them, we begin to wonder if the function of style in other kinds of art is not—without being exactly the same—akin to it. We find that art has never progressed from man to God, but always from God to man, and that the artist has never thought of man as something to copy but always as something to subdue—though he could easily have drawn silhouettes by tracing them, and though moulding was something he knew all about—and we are not surprised that classical idealizing succeeded Oriental hieraticism: only, one day, to succumb itself to the hieraticism of Byzantium. Classical idealizing belongs to the centuries when man became a god, but after God became man it collapsed. The broken lines of Byzantine art, the tubular folds of medieval drapery no longer appear as particular modes of representation. (At the end of the Middle Ages, if the draperies are in stiff folds, the planes of the face melt into one another.) They are methods of consecration, or at least of imparting religious significance. The arabesque of Renaissance and baroque art is similarly an instrument of beauty. And even modern 'distortion', which is still rather too close for us to understand properly, seems to be performing a deliberate service to the individual artist just as

¹ China finds its way into the imaginary collection *via* Buddhism.

Christian art performed a service to God. We realize that plastic art never arises from a mode of seeing the world, but invariably from the desire to make it in a certain shape. Style can no longer be thought of as the distinguishing feature of a school or an epoch, the more or less casual product of a mode of vision. Rather, it is the artist's most important objective, which living forms merely enable him to reach. And to the question, 'What is art?' we are inclined to answer: 'The rendering of forms into style.'

This is the point at which the psychology of creative art begins.

[Translated by COLIN SUMMERFORD]

CHARLES HARVEY

WHERE SHALL JOHN GO?

XVI—INDIA

MY DEAR JOHN,

In India we try to make the best of both worlds. We observe not only the ordinary Christian holidays (including, of course, Saturday afternoons and Sundays) but many of the Hindu and, until 15 August last year, many of the Muslim festivals. This sounds all right, and it is all right for the government servant who made the arrangement; but it is a nuisance for the business man. It is, however, fortunate for you since a Hindu holiday today gives me time to reply to your letter. You say that you have been offered a job in an Advertising Agency with its headquarters in Calcutta and ask my advice about taking it. But since you remark towards the end of your letter, 'I am still green enough to think a walk down Chowringhee more interesting than a walk down the Strand', I take it that you have already made up your mind to accept the offer. I will therefore not waste my time and my still more valuable energy weighing the pros and cons as I see them. (I will, *en passant*, only remark that you will find Chowringhee sadly different from the picture given you, presumably, by some friend who dreamed it in the jungles of Burma; in fact, it is a street of immense possibilities and no fulfilment, architectural or commercial; the Dutch would have made a much better job of it.)

But as you seem to want me to say something about life in India today, I will not deny you a letter.

One of the things you will quickly realize is that writing letters to your family and friends in England is not only physically irksome in this climate but, from the point of view of subject, extremely difficult. At first it is easy enough to describe the strangeness of looking out of your bedroom window on to palm or gul mohur trees, of seeing trams and bullock carts struggling for precedence at a road crossing, of picking your way round sacred bulls resting in the shadow of an arcade or past terribly deformed human beings propped against the windows of expensive stores in the main shopping streets. These superficial impressions you can soon deal with; thereafter you are denied the chatter about common friends or common experiences and are left with discussions of the political situation or with the sort of broad generalization about the impact of the West on the East which you will find poking its head up later on in this letter. These subjects *should* take time to think out and *do* take time to put on paper, and neither activity is, as you will soon learn, encouraged, even on a holiday, by a temperature of 98° and humidity of 92 per cent.

A glance at a reference book will show you that such climatic conditions are not constant even in Calcutta, where I am writing and where you will spend most of your time. We have a famous Cold Weather—justly famous, for the climate in December and January is as near perfect as you could wish. (In Delhi and Northern India the cool period is much longer, in Bombay it is less well defined, and in Madras does not exist. Business is, unfortunately, not carried on in the Hill Stations!) But this is a tropical country where reminders of the heat are always with you, even on mornings when coolies wrap their heads in cotton cloths, their one precaution against the chilly air. A ceiling fan, even when it is stationary, is both ugly in itself and an ugly reminder of the time when it will be turning day and night, blowing your papers off your desk, smoking your pipe for you, making it impossible to help yourself to salt. You say that your war service did not take you further east than Egypt and that you do not mind the heat. Because of the dampness here, and in the other Presidency cities you will find the heat of a different kind, but, like me, you will probably adjust yourself fairly easily and suffer more in

anticipation than in experience. In fact, the mind is more difficult to adjust than the body; by occupying the mind you can, to a certain extent, ignore the physical discomfort of the heat.

And so we come back to the difficulty of making yourself write letters. Where there is routine to keep me going I contrive to ignore the atmosphere; I always think the weather unpleasantly hot on Sundays—or holidays. This leads me to my first word of warning: 'Don't, for this or any other reason, allow work to become the sole purpose of your stay in India.' This is not really as platitudinous as it sounds. Here, home is not where you go when you have finished your day's work; it is England, which you visit every three or four years, which you look forward to retiring to as soon as you can afford to do so, and with which you are apt to lose touch. Work and the making of money tend to assume even less sensible proportions here than they do in, shall we say, Birmingham, and the time between bouts of work is, by most Europeans, quite literally killed, in the usual expensive ways. (The arrangements for such activities are excellent and are often an inducement to those looking for jobs in this country!) With you I need not labour the point; but don't forget Torquay and Cheltenham.

I have purposely dealt first with superficialities since they are bound to make on everyone the first and on many, apparently, the only impact. They are, therefore, not to be despised in any consideration of the life of the British in India. The days are gone of the English member of one of the Services who spent a large part of his official life, as you say your grandfather did, in various Districts of, perhaps, the U.P., learning the dialects, knowing the people and contributing to a wider appreciation of this country by a study of folklore or of wild life. (Admirable anthropological work has been done by members of the I.C.S., and the best book on birds was written by a policeman.) It is now the day of the technical expert who comes out on a five-year contract or of the business man who comes out to make his fortune. I do not suggest that you fit into either of these categories, but I am sure you will be astonished by the behaviour of those who do. The *burra sahib* and the aspirant to that title are by no means creatures of the past. I know business people in this city who would be horrified at the idea of asking Bengalis—supposing they knew any well enough—to visit their houses or flats. There

are still clubs which refuse to admit Indians as guests, let alone as members. This attitude, which, as far as I can see, has hardly altered since August last year, is epitomized for me in the experience of a friend of mine on his last journey across India during the war. As the Bombay Mail rumbled slowly across the Jumna bridge and entered the outskirts of Allahabad, my friend gazed idly at the city, now from one side of the compartment, now from the other. There is nothing remarkable in this particular jumble of white houses but he thought he ought to show some interest on his first sight of it. 'Would you say,' he asked one of his companions, a man who had been in business here for many years, 'would you say the population of Allahabad is about 250,000?' The other made a show of swift mental calculation, with glances across the roofs on either side. 'Yes, about that, I should think,' he said, 'provided, of course, you count the Indians.'

This does not necessarily represent an attitude of racial superiority, though examples of that still, I am sorry to say, occur. It is more likely an example of British insularity. India, to the majority of our fellow-countrymen who come to work here, is not a foreign country as France is a foreign country, or even Japan. True, it is large and strange and hot, and it contains, if you bother to look for them, a great many outlandish inhabitants and practices. But during the last hundred years an ingenious system of islands (to fortify our insularity) and corridors (to satisfy our idea of political compromise) has been constructed on which or along which the Englishman can live and move in an extension of his own country without the tiresome necessity of learning the language or conforming to the customs of the indigenous inhabitants. Any Englishman coming new to the country can step straight into this convenient arrangement; he has no pioneering work to do; his only preparation need be the purchase of suitable clothing. He may extend an island here or widen a corridor there; but the main system has been laid out and has already absorbed most people before they realize that it exists.

Here, then, is my second word of warning: 'Beware of insularity.' Don't be offended by my suggestion that you need it. Those who come here straight from school or university are almost automatically absorbed; but there are plenty of examples of experienced and reasonably intelligent men—and still more of

women—who allow themselves to be sucked in. Let me therefore add a word of advice: 'If you intend to settle here, learn one of the Indian languages.' It is possible to live in India for fifty years without learning any more than a few phrases that pass as Hindustani for issuing instructions to servants. It is easy to shelter behind the twofold excuse that no single language is used all over India and that Indians will always speak better English than you will speak Hindi or Tamil. This state of things will probably exist for some time to come. But you can never hope to understand people without some knowledge of their language and their literature, and I strongly advise your taking lessons in Bengali, from the moment you arrive and before you have time to discover how easy it is to do without it. I suggest Bengali partly because you will be living in Calcutta and partly because it is generally acknowledged (except among Bombay intellectuals) that Bengali literature not only has the most lively tradition but is today the most vigorous and the most interesting. Even though you never become very fluent in the language, your having taken the trouble to learn a little of it will surprise Bengalis and predispose them towards you. I do not suggest that they will be ill-disposed to one with your background (though you ought to soft-pedal your grandfather) and interests, were you to learn no single word of their language; you will find them most warm-hearted and welcoming, and ready to out-talk you in English on any subject you choose to bring up. But they have suffered so long from the unspoken assumption that English ways and the English language are the only proper habits for 'civilized' people that a different approach will help to allay the almost universal feeling of inferiority and to give you a chance of talking to them, even in English, on equal terms.

I take it that you visited the Exhibition at Burlington House last winter, though you do not mention having done so. You were probably disappointed, as I was, at the miserable showing which the modern paintings made. The average exhibition in this country is like that, only worse, because every picture sent in is hung. ('If they have taken the trouble to paint them and gone to the expense of having them framed, why shouldn't we give them a chance?') It is the same lazy tolerance which leads an examiner to throw in a few extra marks so that a boy can pass; but it leads to pen-down strikes on the part of students when they

are faced with a paper which they consider difficult. The result is an atmosphere, skilfully exploited by the Communists, in which strikes flourish with tropical luxuriance.) But there are individual artists of considerable merit (HORIZON had an article two or three years ago on the best of them, Jamini Roy) and there are, all over India, groups of young artists in which there is real hope for the future. But the peculiar difficulties that painters are experiencing in this country are not confined to the plastic arts though they are most obvious there. Burlington House contained enough sculpture to justify the pride of the Indian in this aspect of his heritage; but nothing could be seen of the buildings of which so much of the sculpture was an integral part. There were fine examples of the various schools of painting which flourished from the sixteenth century onwards; but, apart from a few reproductions, nothing could be shown of the great mural paintings executed in the Buddhist period. There were just enough examples of the work of weavers, potters and metal-workers to prove the existence of a living tradition. The Indian artist today is aware, intellectually, of a wonderful heritage; at the same time he has been trained, if he has been trained at all, in what are generally known as Western techniques and with Western models; moreover, he never has an opportunity, either because museums are very bad or because distances are so enormous, of getting to know examples of his heritage. The struggle to achieve some sort of harmony between these (at present) conflicting and inadequate influences produces a welter of imitations and adaptations in every field of creative work. Still, as I have already said, there are artists and designers who are aware of the problem and there is hope that, with courage and perseverance, they will learn to stand by themselves and to be satisfied only with the best work that they can do. But the infinite capacity for taking pains is not often found here.

This lack of a standard—in a motor-mechanic, in a carpenter, in a tailor, in a printer—is one of the features of Indian life which will strike you soonest and irritate you longest. The climate is partly the cause of this—but not to any great extent for this was not always so. The feeling of being a subject people, of being politically irresponsible, of working all the time, directly or indirectly, for the benefit of a foreign power, is also partly a cause, however subconscious this feeling may have been and however stoutly it may be denied by those Indians who say that

this is merely a shoddy and dishonest excuse; the next few years may suggest who is right. It is possible that the survival, in a section of the population, of only the less valuable parts of the Hindu attitude to life, may also be partly responsible; it is certainly true that poverty and undernourishment are potent subsidiary causes. But, whatever the reasons, you will find this unsatisfactory thread running right through Indian life today and appearing, now in botched workmanship, now in utter indifference to the work or welfare of others, now in a total lack of self-discipline, now in open and condoned graft. And you will, I am glad to say, find the Indians the fiercest denouncers of it—though, of course, little is done about it!

I said earlier on that we try to make the best of both worlds here; but how small is our success! The irritation underlying my writing of the last paragraph must have been caused by my having to break off and be inoculated against Plague—bubonic, pneumonic and septicaemic. The war taught us to accept vaccination and injections against Cholera, Typhoid, Paratyphoid and even Yellow Fever, at regular intervals. But Plague is too much like the worst of this world, to visit which you, romantically, wish to leave your own country. Let me repeat: India is not a foreign land; none of the normal touchstones exist. Unless you are invited to private houses the opportunities for eating indigenous food are negligible, though this food is delicious and of infinite variety; Bengal would be entitled on her sweets alone to immortality among the countries which have contributed something to a civilized way of life. Local wines do not, so far as I know, exist, and the local distillations of spirit are neither easy to get nor, for most people, pleasant to drink. (*But there are excellent Chinese restaurants, and Prohibition is making headway with almost ludicrous speed; so there is a kind of foreignness!*) The comfortable cinemas show, almost without exception, English and American films, though the Indian film industry is the second largest in the world; there are one or two Film Societies which show Continental films, but Calcutta has none. It is possible to hear Indian music; but you have to hunt it out, except on the radio where you will very quickly have heard enough. Drama, particularly in Bengali, flourishes but, again, requires persistence and endurance in the non-Indian patron. Indian Dancing has a certain Western *cachet* and is therefore easier to see something of.

Altogether, the British purpose during the last two hundred years does seem to have been to make this world a British world and in this it has been partially and miserably successful.

Forgive my riding away on generalizations; whether this is the result of the heat, of my inoculation or of the general atmosphere engendered by people whose language delights in abstract nouns (one of the first signs, perhaps, of the ebbing tide), I do not know and you will be past caring. I have, at least, spared you my political views, which is more than most of your Indian friends will do. The habit of talking politics, natural in a people without political responsibility, is now so ingrained that independence has merely shifted the emphasis. Even the present Provincial Governments, the choice of whose ministers must be first from among those who spent some time in prison under the British Raj, have taken up and put on the mantle which their hated predecessors let fall and are locking up their political opponents and breeding a new body of martyrs in the Cause. Even the students demonstrate in front of Government buildings just as they did in the bad old days. And as for Pakistan, towards which most Englishmen are so attracted (did you read the *New Statesman* on this interesting subject?), I have omitted all mention of it.

But I will conclude this inordinately long letter (like Raymond Mortimer—please don't think all my reading is confined to one periodical!—I am one of those 'who dearly love a bishop' but none more than the one who wrote, 'Forgive my writing to you at such length but I have not time to write a short letter'), I will conclude with a few concrete remarks. You must make up your mind to see as much as possible of India while you are here. It is easy to remain near the flesh-pots of Calcutta or of one of the Hill Stations, and it is usually uncomfortable to travel; but there are wonderful places to visit—places where the Burlington House exhibits originally belonged—and there are, as yet, few tourists. You must be prepared for life to be very expensive; don't translate the salary you have been offered into its exchange equivalent in sterling and imagine you are going to be well off. Income Tax is less than in England but, even so, think of the Rupee as equal to a shilling and you won't be far out. If it is any comfort to you I may add that there is nothing you cannot buy here at a price. If you want any detailed advice about your wardrobe I will let you have it; I will only mention here that you will not need a solar topee.

SELECTED NOTICE

Land Without Heroes. By G. F. Green. Home & Van Thal. 7s. 6d.

Something Terrible, Something Lovely. William Sansom. Hogarth Press, 8s. 6d.

Wall of Dust. By Hallam Tennyson. Secker & Warburg, 8s. 6d.

Why does the short story seem such an orphan among literary forms? Because it is possibly the oldest? Certainly, if it is to be given an ancestry, it can be traced back beyond Chaucer, Boccaccio, to the Arabian Nights, beyond that, if you like, to Apuleius, Petronius, and beyond that again to the Bible. But the short story itself insists on being unconscious of its ancestry. Every practitioner begins with the assumption that his story is a different one from any other. The reader has to accept the assumption—at least to start with. It is safest to approach the short story without any other expectations, to regard it as a square of canvas which the artist fills up as he likes.

Sansom has a variety of designs to offer. His range of experiment widens, and one hopes, will continue to do so. Friends and critics may be telling him which of the several distinguishable Sansoms in the present collection he should choose to be. But I do not see why he should reject all the rest in favour of one, or why the reader should do it for him. Fireman Sansom is already well known; then there is Sansom the camera-man with a magnifying glass in his hand; Sansom the naturalist who peeps and botanizes in the weedy wilderness of the derelict mind; Sansom the philosopher, toying with metaphysical quips and notions; Kafka-Sansom (the influence is still there, though it is thinning out); and more portentous, Poe-Sansom. The last I find least likeable of the family—very much a youngest brother, spoiled, threatening, a boy who will have his way with you at all costs; too intent on giving you the creeps to be much of an artist. Suspense is the basest element in fiction. Poe, the born exploiter, exploited most of its forms, from panic to curiosity, to their limits. They have been exploited beyond their limits ever since. 'Take suspense and wring its neck'—Verlaine's advice might well be paraphrased for the story-teller. The most that can be said for Poe-Sansom is that he avoids the bathos of deliverance. He takes you to the top of *The Vertical Ladder* and leaves you dangling; he locks you in *The Little Room*, extracts the air from it (very slowly) but does not let you out at the last moment. An improvement on the *Pit and the Pendulum*, but why exploit vertigo or claustrophobia at all?

There are limits, too, to the technique of camera and magnifying glass. One of the stories where it is most assiduously applied, *The Kiss*, is instantly overwhelmed by a memory of one of the virtuoso passages in Proust. The stories with notions have better, though varying success. The trouble with notions is that they tend to separate, to form a thick deposit in the clear element of the narrative. An artist has every right to his speculative, ethical notions, so long as he does not use them in his work, or, if he does, introduces them as irrelevantly as possible. When they ensconce themselves importantly in the middle of the work, something awkward happens. The reader finds he has come to a meeting and must sit and look as if he were listening to the lecturer; but he had come to look at the pictures. *Crabroth* is a gallery of pictures, and the smallest of them, an image of water boiling in a can—

'Little bubbles rose from the bottom of the tin and disappeared through the

surface into their brother air. . . They rained upwards endlessly, forming magically, jogging swiftly to the surface . . . is worth more than all the two lecturers, also inconsequently present in the gallery, have to say.

Such an experience might prompt you to wish the notions away altogether. Then you may read *How Claeys Died*, a story in which narrative and notion do not altogether separate. They exist rather like Siamese twins. You cannot have one without the other. But it seems to me that the best stories, *The Windows*, *Something Terrible*, *Something Lovely*, are free of notions altogether. They cannot be labelled at all. They come out of nowhere, and exist absolutely in their own right. But for them one might be tempted to say that Sansom, though he can create experience, cannot create people. But the people of these stories exist, just sufficiently, but they do exist. And to create a sense of character solely through inner experience is a rare and difficult achievement.

G. F. Green is a scarce and puzzling writer. His work at times has formidable power, and yet why should it be so limited, not only in range, but in quantity and scope? The present collection is apparently a first one, consisting of a dozen stories, none of them long, the earliest dating from 1936. A dozen stories in as many years? True, they are all tightly written, with an economy that shrinks to parsimony, with a deliberation which is more like the dour and pessimistic caution which pervades his characters. He writes exclusively, doggedly about the same people (industrial derelicts) in the same place (the mill-ridden, coal-bitten slopes of the western Pennine moors) at the same moment of time (the industrial nadir of the thirties). Yet even within these limits the range is cruelly narrow. The people of his stories are too often like the more mindlessly savage minor characters of the Brontë novels. The poor are not all like this. Poverty distorts as much as it cramps, it begets its own wildness and eccentricity as much as wealth—witness the world of Joyce's Dublin. It is difficult to decide how far his limits are self-imposed, and how far they are inescapable. Within them his material is imminently exhaustible, if not exhausted. Let him at least move forward in time. His world today is a very different one from what it was in 1930.

Certainly Green is not a naturalistic writer. It seems almost as if he had been cornered by the cry of escapism which, in the thirties, was hurled after any writer who showed a technical interest in his art. All artists are escapists. It is their business to escape through the barrage of propaganda, statistics, and newspaper opinion into—reality, whatever they find it to be. Green penetrates most deeply into his own reality when he uses an obviously artificial form. In two of his three best stories he employs the same form—the circular or serpentine plot which wheels back to where it began. Not only does this confer a shape which most of his other stories lack, it compels an intensity from his writing which is elsewhere baffled or squandered—an intensity which is often enough blunted by the style itself, bludgeoned, truncated clauses, either bleeding at both ends or cut dead.

Between Sansom and Green on one hand and Hallam Tennyson on the other there is the difference between an artist with a considered sense of design and a man with a knack for drawing a likeness. Tennyson can have a shrewd and sympathetic eye for detail but it penetrates only rarely through the rapture of

cliché in which he writes. It looks as if he had chosen the form of the short story as the first thing to hand. His material here consists entirely of memory and anecdote—framed by conjecture—of experiences during the war, in Italy, Egypt, Palestine, the desert. Usually the central theme is loss of youthful illusions, the entry into the valley of indecision. An expatriate Italian American, on leave, returns to the dusty village of his birth; a Jewish soldier, again on leave, pays a brief tormenting visit to Zion; a 'wracked' English officer, again on leave, in Rome, surveys his own exhaustion, his lost illusions, his inability to go on, finds sudden and unexpected release from his torture. None of these phantoms Childe Harolds is convincing. Their chief interest is the personality—sensitive, earnest, charming—of their creator. The chief merit of the stories has nothing to do with creative writing. Tennyson uses words to convey information as quickly as possible—from his own point of view, not the reader's. At its best his style is good newspaper reportage. As often it degenerates to:

'The moonlight gave a weird touch to the scene. Was it some ancient Bacchic ritual, duly Christianized and performed each spring? The onlooker would almost certainly have been caught up in the fantastic struggle before he had time to decide. For all surrounding objects were drawn as if by some uncanny power.'

If one reads on, it is for the interest of an intelligent, heart-to-heart account of wartime experiences—experiences which have been much considered, but not digested into the form they are here given. Nevertheless a capacity not merely for sympathy but for real imaginative projection shows itself in snatches. When it is fully realized it may well need the larger scope of the novel—and even the novelist will need a style which does not drop quite so patly into the beaten track. He could study a variety of styles in Sansom, or Green's laconic, with profit—or better still, forge a new one. The ears of most readers must be longing for a writer who can write in periods—so long as they are not Johnsonian, Gibbonian, or Jamesian—instead of in phrases so cut and dried that they crack; for a writer who has some sense of the vagueness and multiplicity of words, as well as their precision. Flaubert it was who started using words as if they were precision instruments, and he is presumably responsible for one of the worst bugbears of contemporary writing, the worship of the *mot juste*, the everlasting (it seems) adherence to the noticing style. Nothing can be allowed to pass the writer's eye without having a label stuck to it. The words are all that exists between writer and reader. If they are used as being attachable to things, then what things? The writer who is perpetually in pursuit of the *mot juste* presents you, in the end, with nothing but an empty suitcase, covered all over with labels.

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